THE memoirs of William Powell Frith, Royal Academician, and one of the best representatives of the modern school of English painting, furnish as entertaining reading as even a captious man could wish for. The work is entitled "My Autobiography and Reminiscences" (Harper) and, the author having nearly completed the scriptural tale of three score and ten, it covers the past fifty years, introducing us to a great variety of scenes, and bringing us into the familiar presence of a long series of famous Englishmen, from such bygone worthies as Landseer and Dickens to such well-known characters of our own day as Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. We must confess that we find it difficult to speak in moderate terms of the extreme interest of this volume. As a collection of amusing stories and anecdotes of famous men it is almost unrivalled in the literature of the extensive class to which it belongs. Mr. Frith has not only lived the life of a successful painter, but also that of a man of the world, and the wide range of sympathies shown in his works is paralleled by the equally wide range displayed in these reminiscences of his intercourse with his fellow men. And all through his narrative we feel the presence of his own genial personality, a little self-conscious perhaps, but altogether delightful as a companion. If we had space for extracts, we could amply justify these general observations; lacking it, we can only hope that the new circle of friends which the artist's book is sure to gain for him will be as large as he deserves.

Ulrich Middeldorf

2 vol.

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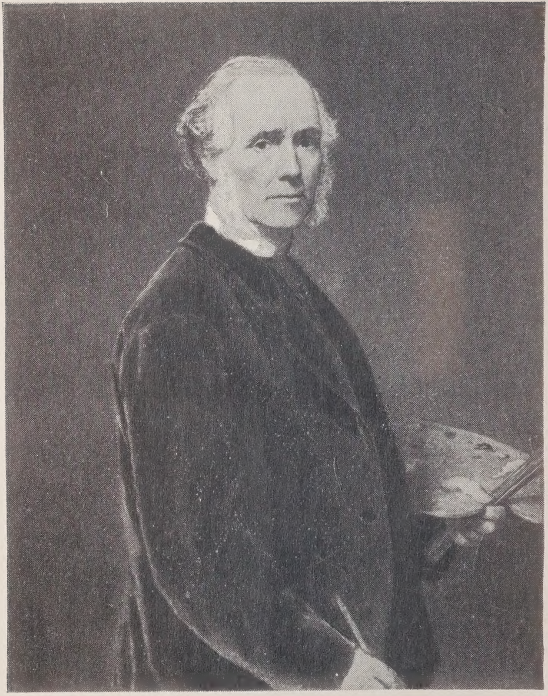

W. P. FRITH, R.A.

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

AND

REMINISCENCES

BY

W. P. FRITH, R.A.

CHEVALIER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR AND OF THE ORDER OF LEOPOLD;
MEMBER OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF BELGIUM, AND OF THE
ACADEMIES OF STOCKHOLM, VIENNA, AND ANTWERP

> "*The pencil speaks the tongue of every land*"
> DRYDEN

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE
1888

THE GETTY CENTER
LIBRARY

TO

MY WIFE

IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HER
CONSTANT SYMPATHY AND EVER-READY HELP

I Dedicate

THESE REMINISCENCES

TO THE WRITING OF WHICH
I HAVE BEEN STIMULATED BY HER BELIEF
THAT THEY WILL BE OF INTEREST
TO THE GENERAL READER

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER PAGE

I. EARLY DAYS 1

II. MY FUTURE DESTINY DISCUSSED 7

III. MY CAREER DETERMINED 15

IV. THE SCHOOL OF ART 23

V. THE LIFE SCHOOL 40

VI. PRACTICE IN PORTRAIT-PAINTING 46

VII. "POSTING" FROM HARROGATE TO LONDON . . . 51

VIII. FIRST ATTEMPTS AT "SUBJECT-PICTURES" . . . 57

IX. MY FIRST SUCCESS 66

X. ELECTED AN ASSOCIATE 82

XI. THE "OLD ENGLISH MERRY-MAKING" 88

XII. DINNER-PARTY AT LORD NORTHWICK'S 103

XIII. ON SUBJECTS 109

XIV. PICTURE-SEEING IN BELGIUM AND HOLLAND . . 115

XV. SERVICE OF ART IN DETECTION OF CRIME . . . 124

XVI. THE "COMING OF AGE" 130

XVII. SUBJECTS FROM GOLDSMITH, SMOLLETT, AND MOLIÈRE 143

XVIII. THE HANGING COMMITTEE 153

XIX. HANGING REMINISCENCES 166

XX. "RAMSGATE SANDS" 171

XXI. "THE DERBY DAY" 189

XXII. PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS 213

XXIII. SUCCESS OF "THE RAILWAY STATION" 229

XXIV. "THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES" . . 235

XXV. THE GREAT ACTORS OF MY YOUTH 255

XXVI. "THE SALON D'OR" 271

CHAPTER PAGE

XXVII. REJECTED SUBJECTS 289

XXVIII. THE PIOUS MODEL 309

XXIX. VISIT TO ITALY 315

XXX. THE BEARDED MODEL 332

XXXI. "THE ROAD TO RUIN". 342

XXXII. THE FONTHILL STORY 353

XXXIII. "THE RACE FOR WEALTH" 358

XXXIV. A MYSTERIOUS SITTER 369

XXXV. JOHN FORSTER AND THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS. 390

XXXVI. SECOND VISIT TO THE LOW COUNTRIES . . . 395

XXXVII. THE DOCTOR'S STORY 399

XXXVIII. "FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE" 406

XXXIX. MODELS—THIEVISH 411

XL. "OLD MASTERS". 414

XLI. A SUCCESSFUL DEALER. 420

XLII. A STRANGE ADVENTURE 429

XLIII. MEN-SERVANTS. 435

XLIV. "THE PRIVATE VIEW". 441

XLV. DR. DORAN 446

XLVI. MY LATER PROFESSIONAL WORK. 453

XLVII. A STRANGE PURCHASE 458

XLVIII. THE CRAZY ARTIST 464

XLIX. JOHN LEECH 469

L. A GHOST STORY 474

LI. THE STORY OF MY PORTRAIT. 480

LII. JENNY LIND, MR. BARNUM, AND OTHERS . . . 485

LIII. LADY ARTISTS. 488

LIV. PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN 493

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND REMINISCENCES.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

Though it has been constantly urged, and with a considerable amount of truth, that the lives of painters in their somewhat monotonous course present but little or no interest when told, I have thought that if the painter himself were to be the historian, and he were to describe simply and truly his early career up to the final success or failure of it, he might point a moral, though from want of literary ability he might not be able to adorn a tale. At the present date I have passed more than fifty years of artistic life; and I propose to relate the many ups and downs of it, my means and methods of study, some experiences of great difficulties, and the way they have been occasionally surmounted, together with matter more or less interesting arising from circumstances connecting me with men and things with whom, and with which, I have been in contact in the progress of my life and work.

To begin at the beginning, I was born on the 9th of January, 1819, at a little village in Yorkshire called Aldfield. My father held a position of trust in the family of the then owner of Studley Royal, Mrs. Lawrence. He had a taste for art, and a proficiency in the practice of it which proper cultivation would have improved into excellence—as many of his drawings still in my possession go very far to prove. He collected engravings and pictures which were poor enough, but in which the ignorance which is sometimes bliss enabled him to see merits which did not exist; and it was this passion that blinded him into thinking that a wretched drawing done by me when I was about eleven years old showed signs of a genius worth cultivating. That drawing I still have: it is a copy from Moreland of an animal that might have been a dog under the hand of Moreland, but in my translation of it the species is left undetermined—anything worse or more hopeless it would be impossible to imagine. But I anticipate. I have no very early recollections interesting to myself or anybody else. My family, consisting of two brothers and a sister, with the "parent pair," left Aldfield about the year 1826, and went to Harrogate, a well-known watering-place, where my father became the landlord of a large rambling inn called The Dragon, now in ruins. It was at that time that the little general education ever allowed me was begun, and I was sent to school at Knaresborough.

How fortunate is the present generation compared with that of sixty years ago! How great the change for the better—in the fact of such schools as those to which I was sent, all more or less of the "Dotheboys Hall" pattern, being improved off the face of the earth—is so evident as to need no proof from me. It is a great satisfaction to me to feel that I have been able to give my own children such educations as have enabled them to take positions, and to do work, utterly denied to me.

As nearly as I can remember, it was on a winter's evening in 1830 when I was sitting idly looking over some of my father's engravings—having previously obeyed an order from my mother to wash my hands, as those members in their normal condition were justly considered to be unfit to touch those precious prints—that I asked for a pencil and paper, and tried to copy an engraving of a dog. What impelled me to the deed which actually determined my future life I cannot tell. If I might guess at the motive, I think it was merely that I thought it would afford me a chance of sitting up later than the hour of the children's bedtime—rigorously fixed at nine o'clock—as it did, for I was allowed to finish my wonderful production there and then. If I have a doubt as to what prompted me to my first work, I have none whatever as to what induced me to undertake the second.

I received sixpence for the dog, with a promise of a similar reward for another effort. From that moment, and on such evidence, I was considered the genius of the family, and schoolmasters were informed that all other learning must be considered secondary to the cultivation of this great gift! and very secondary indeed it became. I found copying Dutch prints much easier than geography and the use of the globes, to say nothing of Latin, for a very slight experience of that language led me to feel that life would be unendurable if I were compelled to learn it; so that beyond a little of the grammar, and the acquisition of a few quotations—which I find useful to this day when I desire to create an impression that they are but samples of a wealth of the classical knowledge that I possess—I know nothing whatever about it. Greek was not one of the accomplishments taught at any of my schools, so I was spared that trouble. My education was finished at a large establishment at St. Margaret's, near Dover, kept by a very amiable man named Temple, who, with a staff of ushers, boarded and educated nearly a hundred boys for twenty pounds a year apiece. I really believe the education was quite extraordinary for the price paid for it; but I cannot speak with authority, for I was only allowed a very little of it, the most of my time being taken up with my eternal copying in chalks, or lead-pencil, with a little pen and ink for a change, from any good, bad, or indifferent print that fell in my way. I was placed in charge of the drawing-master, a Frenchman, with strict injunctions to allow me to do as I liked; and these injunctions received his careful attention, for he never interfered with me. Indeed, I soon found that his knowledge was as limited as my own; and it will scarcely be believed when we see the system, admirable as it is, which is now almost universally adopted in school-teaching, that in my early days bad drawings of impossible landscapes, and still more outrageous figures, were the only models placed before art students, who made bad worse, and only learned that which they had most studiously to forget when they began serious work.

I remained about two years at St. Margaret's, and, except a little French, I learned nothing. There were several French boys from whom I, *nolens volens* (here you have classical example number one), picked up a little of the polite language of the world; in return, I endeavored to instil into one of them a little knowledge of the manly art of self-defence as it is practised in this country. There was a chronic state of ill-feeling between the French and English boys. Waterloo was a red rag which we pretty often shook in their faces; frogs were sought and found in the ditches about St. Margaret's, and also in the beds of the French boys, who, on remonstrating, were accused of ingratitude for complaining of gratuitous gifts of their national food. I forget what my immediate cause of quarrel was with one of them (a long, thin fellow, taller than I); whatever it may have been, the result was a fight behind a haystack in a neighboring farmyard—that is, if the affair could be dignified by the name of a fight. I placed myself in the posture of self-defence with which I was familiar from my usual source of information—engraving. My adversary, who was very angry, stared at my projected fists for a moment, then flew at me like a cat, scratching, kicking, and clawing in a very irregular manner; and it was only after a desperate struggle to free myself from his long legs and get my hair out of his clutches with some loss of it, that I was able to give him "one on his peepers" (to use the language of the P.R.), which produced a very black eye, and made him cry, and the battle was over.

This was my first and last fight.

To turn from war to peace, it must be evident to any thoughtful person who may be improving his mind by reading these pages, that my art studies must have resulted in a very large heap of copies from prints, but never in an attempt to draw anything from nature, or to design a composition from imagination—an element of mind which I might, or might not, possess, but without which success in art is hopeless. I fancy everybody can remember the exquisite delight of his first visit to a theatre, or the reading of his first novel; both those experiences are very vivid to me at this moment. Long before I went to St. Margaret's, when I was very young, I revelled in works of imagination—the novels of G. P. R. James, the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and, above and before all, the works of Scott and Cooper. The two last named still retain their charm for me. Mr. James I have tried again, but the old love is dead, and I now wonder it was ever born. I can recall the bright pictures with which the Wizard of the North filled my imagination. Why I did not, as a boy, try to reproduce Rebecca and Ivanhoe, or Jeanie Deans, or Madge Wildfire (I had enough of them afterwards), however imperfectly, is now a wonder to me—a wonder and a lesson—for unless my sensibilities, like Miss Squeers's, "came late into blow," I could have done something in the shape of original work instead of wasting valuable, irrecoverable time in profitless copying. I know very well that I never was, nor under any circumstances could have become, a great artist; but I am a very successful one, and my advice is often asked by anxious parents who produce specimens of their children's work, and place me in the really awful position of a kind of destiny over the future of their sons or daughters. Let me advise all artists who may find themselves elected arbiters of the fate of others to be as dumb as the ancient oracle when difficulties were presented. Except in the rarest and most exceptional cases, judgment from early specimens is absolutely impossible. Consider the quality of mind and body requisite for a successful artistic career—long and severe study from antique statues, from five to eight hours every day; then many months' hard work from the life, with attendance at lectures, study of perspective, anatomy, etc.; general reading to be attended to also—all this before painting is attempted, and when attempted the student may find he has no eye for color. I do not mean color-blind, which is of course fatal, but that he is not appreciative of all the subtle tints and tones of flesh; or, what is more fearful still, he may find that he has all the language of art at his fingers'-ends, and that he has nothing to say. I illustrate this by an example of one of my fellow-students at the Royal Academy, a young fellow named Powell, who died long ago. He was highly accomplished in many ways; he drew splendidly. His studies from the nude were the admiration of student and professor alike. He gained medals in all the schools, and when he tried to turn his knowledge to account and produce pictures he failed utterly. Composition and arrangement of the colors, and light and shadow, necessary in a group of more or less figures, cannot be taught, or if taught by line and rule the result is *nil;* the whole thing is a matter of feeling and imagination. An artist must see his picture finished in his mind's eye before he begins it, or he will never be an artist at all. Powell could not appreciate the difference between a good composition and a bad one, nor could he understand the value and importance of light and shadow. I think what I have just said is worthy the attention of advised and advisers alike, and I desire to impress on all those who rely upon advice, no matter from whatever eminent source, that the risk they run is terrible.

CHAPTER II.

MY FUTURE DESTINY DISCUSSED.

I NOW go back to my own career. On returning home from school with my bundle of specimens, a family council was called, with friends to assist. There was no doubt in the mind of any one of them, I verily believe, that I was a great genius.

"Why, just look," said an old woman in the shape of a man, "you can't tell one from t'other!" showing a print of Teniers' and my chalk copy from it; and they certainly were, and are (for they still hang and can be compared on my staircase), very much alike.

I was the wonder of High Harrogate, then my home. People came and asked for a sight of the wonderful works, which my dear mother showed with a pardonable pride. She could not and did not ask her guests to wash their hands—a treatment, as I remember, desirable for some of them; but she would never let the drawings leave her own hands, for fear of the precious things being rubbed or otherwise injured.

"If I was you," said one wiseacre, "I'd never let him have any teaching; they'd spoil him. Look at Mr. Wilkie now, the man that did the 'Blind Fiddler' and that; he was self-taught."

"No, he wasn't," said my father. "Don't you talk of what you know nothing about."

I may remark here that my father was a gruff, silent man, but by no means such a fool as to think that a self-taught artist had anything but a fool for both master and pupil. At this time I was in my fifteenth year, and it was thought desirable that my future career should be determined. My eldest brother had died, my youngest one was intended for the law, and I for the arts if I decided on that profession. Parents, in nearly all instances that have come within my experience, have shown marked and often angry opposition to the practice of art as a profession for their children; naturally and properly, I think, considering the precarious nature of its pursuit. My parents were exceptions to that rule, and I shall never forget my father's look of disappointment when, on his asking me if I should like to go to London and learn to be a real artist, I replied:

"I don't care much about it."

"Well, what would you like to be? You must do something for your living, you know."

"I think I should like to be an auctioneer, or something of that kind."

"An auctioneer be ——!" said my father, who used strong language sometimes.

Itinerant artists, generally portrait-painters, wandered over the country fifty years ago, more I think than they do now; and so long as vanity influences the human being, there will be work for the limners of faces, for not only do the sitters satisfy themselves and their friends with the "counterfeit presentment" of their figures, but they fancy themselves encouragers of the arts as well. Fuseli, who could not have painted a decent portrait to save his life, but who produced works of a weird and poetic character of great excellence (which rarely found purchasers), says in one of his lectures, after abusing portrait-painting as a low kind of art, "Every fool who has a phiz to expose and a guinea to throw away thinks by the expenditure of that small sum he becomes a patron of art." There was a goodly crop of such people in Yorkshire, and among the reapers was one, whose name I suppress, that my father took me to see—a Mr. H——, who had pitched his tent at Knaresborough, and turned a large drawing-room over a linen-draper's shop into a studio. Judging from the number of finished and unfinished portraits on easels and against the walls, the artist was doing a good stroke of business. To me they were "too lovely," to use a colloquialism of to-day—one of a stout lady in emerald-green velvet quite won my heart, and I really felt a mild desire to do likewise. It must be remembered that up to this time I had seen no modern pictures, but only the ancient ones in my father's collection. Those were very dark, so obscure as to cause one of our Harrogate friends to say that he "didn't care a button for the old masters, for you have to take a sponge and wet 'em all over before you know what the subjects are about."

Mr. H——'s pictures were bright and lovely, and he received a commission there and then from my father to paint my mother, for which he was to receive twenty pounds and free quarters at the Dragon during the progress of the work. I was allowed to watch the operation, and all our friends applauded the result. My mother was the one unsatisfied—"he had not caught her expression," she said, and she was right. The picture is now in the possession of the proprietor of the Granby Hotel at Harrogate, where I saw it three years ago. It is indeed a forlorn production, without one quality of decent art in it. Poor H——! he tried his fortune in London, sent picture after picture to the Academy, and never got one exhibited.

"I know they have a personal spite against me," he said to me one day. "And look at their own infernal rubbish! I am not conceited" (poor H——!). "I walked round those rooms" (at Somerset House) "and compared my own work with what is there, and it's enough to make a man's blood boil to see such things hung and such as mine rejected." Then after a pause he said, "Look here, Frith—now you won't mention what I am going to tell you to any one; oh, I know you won't—now next year I shall send my portraits in under a feigned name, 'Algernon Sydney,' or something like that, and then you will just see whether those men are honest or not; for I have heard—in fact I know—that so long as my own name is attached to my work, it will never be admitted."

Next year came, but "Algernon Sydney" came not; no such name could be found in the catalogue.

"My dear H——," said I, on meeting him shortly after the opening of the Exhibition, "did you send your pictures to the R.A., as you said you would, under a feigned name?"

"Yes, I did," said he; "but the ruffians found me out, and rejected them again, of course."

H—— soon fled from the battlefield where he was always beaten by far stronger men, and became quite a favorite portrait-painter in a town in the north of England. There he married one of his sitters—a very handsome girl four-and-twenty years younger than himself—and died at a ripe old age a few years ago, in the firm belief, not an uncommon one among disappointed artists, that he had been ruined by the Royal Academy.

As my father and I returned home after seeing the H—— collection, he recurred to the subject of my future destiny.

"Surely you would like to be able to paint such pictures as H——'s," said he.

"Yes, but I never could; still, I will try if you wish it."

Not much of the sacred fire in all this, not much of the passion for art which Constable once stigmatized in a man who painted very poor pictures, and who claimed a right to have them exhibited because painting had been all his life a passion that possessed him. "Yes," said Constable, "a *bad* passion."

Soon after this my father showed me a letter from Sir Launcelot Shadwell, who was, I think, vice-chancellor, and who had been one of the visitors at The Dragon for several seasons. The letter was in reply to an inquiry as to the best way of proceeding in the event of my studying as an artist. Sir Launcelot had seen my drawings, and, being pardonably ignorant, had seen, or fancied he saw, not only promise, but such performance in them as would make much instruction unnecessary! Mr. Phillips, R.A., however, a friend of the vice-chancellor's, informs all and sundry that the kind of drawing described to him meant nothing; that if I intended to follow the profession seriously I had best go to London and place myself under a Mr. Sass, who had a school of art in Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury; and after I had worked hard there for two or three years, I might possibly become a student of the Royal Academy, where I should find ample and gratuitous instruction. I was a light-minded, rather idle, flighty youth, not at all fond of serious work, and this letter frightened me. I told my father I did not think my health would stand such work as that.

"What do you mean—your health? What's the matter with your health? You have never been ill in your life, except when you had measles. Don't talk such stuff! Now look here," he added; "I want to talk to you seriously" (he seldom talked, and always seriously). "You have your living to get; everybody says you show ability for the artist business; will you follow it? If you will, I shall take you to London, and am willing to spend some money on it; and if you won't do this, what will you do? If you are not an artist, what will you be?"

I had been two or three times to an auction-room, and the business seemed a very easy and, I had heard, a profitable one; so instead of saying I would die rather than not be a painter, I reiterated to my father that I thought I should like auctioneering better. Again the blank look of disappointment; then, after a pause, he said,

"Very well, will you agree to this? You and I will go to London. I will take your drawings and show them to Sir Launcelot Shadwell's friend the R.A. If he says you ought to be an artist, will you go to this Mr. What's-his-name in Bloomsbury and learn the business? If he thinks nothing of your drawings, I will apprentice you to Oxenham's in Oxford Street, and you can learn auctioneering. Now, what do you say?"

"Very well, I will."

"You agree to what I propose?"

"Yes, I do."

"Now go and tell your mother; she will be pleased, I know."

Before I take leave of the Dragon Hotel, an incident which created an ineffaceable impression on my youthful mind may be related. The house was a large, rambling structure, the basement consisting of a bar, a kitchen in which the giant Blunderbore might have regaled himself, reception-rooms of all sorts and sizes, and a ballroom of enormous length; to say nothing of parlors rejoicing in fancy names, such as "The Green," "The George," "The

Bear," "The Angel," and so on. The sleeping accommodation of the guests consisted of rooms of various sizes, on each side of very long and narrow passages, dignified by the name of galleries, which started in different directions, from no special point, according to the caprice of the builders, to whom changes and additions had been intrusted and made at various periods during more than a hundred years. The rooms were destitute of bells, but there was one common to each gallery. It was about the year 1828 or 1829 that the son of my father's banker, accompanied by his wife's brother, a Captain Rowe, came to Harrogate in the hope that some weeks' experience of the fine air and the waters might restore his shattered health. The banker's son, whose name was Owen, had been but recently married. Mrs. Owen went to visit some friends in the South, leaving her husband to the care of her brother. These gentlemen came to us as my father's friends, and not as ordinary guests to the hotel. They dined with us, and on the evening of the day of their arrival, my brother and I were allowed to assist at a round game of cards, and to sit up much beyond our usual bedtime. We were ordered off at last, to our great regret, for both the guests, especially the invalid, made much of us, and winked at certain boyish tricks which, I am afraid, bore a strong resemblance to cheating. My brother and I slept together in a room made from an odd corner separated from the galleries. We were no sooner in bed than we were both fast asleep. How long I had been in that condition of "honeyed slumber" I know not, but I was suddenly aroused from it by a fearful cry—quite unlike anything I have heard before or since. I jumped out of bed, followed by my brother, and we opened our door in time to see two white figures, one flying down a long gallery, and the other pursuing and uttering yell after yell. They disappeared down a staircase, and in the direction of a room in which I knew my father was likely to be, as he was in the habit of using it for business purposes—making up accounts and so on—often till the small hours of the morning.

My brother and I crept down-stairs in mortal terror, and saw the open door of my father's room, in which a light was burning. Except for the violent barking of a dog that seldom left my father, the silence was unbroken. We were trying to see into the room when one of the white figures, Captain Rowe, came stealthily up to us, literally paralyzing me with fear.

"Now what on earth are you boys doing out of bed? Go back this moment."

We couldn't move; but the captain went cautiously to the door of the room and looked in. His naked feet could not have been heard, but quicker than thought a terrific blow was struck with some hard substance by an unseen hand, accompanied by an awful cry.

In the rapidity of his exit the captain had pulled the door after him, thus making a shield for himself which no doubt saved his life. He rushed up-stairs, beckoning us to follow. In terror and tears we followed him. He pushed us into our room, ordered us instantly to lock ourselves in, and not to stir again till the servant came to us in the morning. Sleep was out of the question. From our window we could see that morning had come, for day was breaking; and as we looked we heard my father's voice calling to some men who were driving a cart past the house. The cart stopped, and the men seemed to join my father, and we heard no more. Presently the men reappeared, and the cart was driven away. Next morning my mother, with many tears, explained the mystery.

Mr. Owen and the captain went to sleep in a double-bedded room. The captain was awoke by his brother-in-law, who, kneeling upon his body, was endeavoring to strangle him. Captain Rowe, by far the more powerful man of the two, flung his assailant on the floor, and made for the door, feeling sure, from the cries and wild words, that sudden insanity had seized his friend. The door was locked, and for an awful instant—during which he heard the madman at the fire-irons—the key refused to turn. He threw his vast strength against the door, and burst it open. Then began the flight and pursuit that we witnessed. Rowe made his way accidentally to the room in which my father sat, closely followed by Owen armed with the poker, which afterwards dealt such a blow to the parlor door as to mark it for many years (indeed, till it was replaced by a new one). The sudden light seemed to dazzle and divert the madman, who stood quietly in my father's room, staring at the dog, who fortunately continued to bark. My father guessed the whole business, and went quietly to the window and opened the shutters. Most fortunately at the moment a cart was passing, and two men, called by my father, came through the window, went quietly behind the maniac—who continued staring at the dog—pinioned him, seized the poker, and threw him without much difficulty on to the sofa. My father pulled down one of the bell-ropes, and in a few minutes the poor fellow was harmless.

Owen never recovered. He was one of the most violent patients in the asylum at York, where he afterwards died.

CHAPTER III.

MY CAREER DETERMINED.

It was on a bleak March afternoon in 1835 that I started for London to make my fortune. My father had charge of me and a large portfolio of drawings, the exhibition of which to a well-selected judge was to devote me to art or tie me to an auctioneer's desk. I think at the present time an express train requires little more than four hours to make the journey from Leeds to London—fifty years ago the quickest Royal Mail passage occupied never less than twenty-four hours, and sometimes, in snowy winter weather especially, much longer; and the weariness, the cramp, the sleeplessness of those terrible times can with difficulty be realized by the luxurious travellers of to-day. My father and I were packed inside with two other passengers.

"Is this your son, sir?" said one.

"I believe so," replied my father.

"Then would you mind asking him to manage his legs a little better? I should like to get to London with some skin on my shins, if it's all the same to the young gentleman."

We entered London through Highgate Archway, and my first impression of the great city was very disappointing—of course totally unlike the grand place I had imagined. The morning was foggy, and from a distance London resembled a huge gray bank of fog, with the dome of St. Paul's rising out of it; and when we entered it by dirty Islington, and rattled through streets each uglier and dirtier than the last, my illusions vanished.

The coach stopped at the Saracen's Head, on Snow Hill. Each passenger claimed his luggage. My precious drawings had been preserved in a folio covered with some material like tarpaulin, impervious to the weather. They were safe, as were our portmanteaus. The hotel porter fetched us a lumbering hackney-coach, driven by a man whose coat of many capes amazed me. Two miserable horses dragged us slowly to my uncle's house in Brook Street, Grosvenor Square.

My uncle's name was Scaife, and he became my uncle by marrying my mother's sister. His trade was that of a hotel-keeper. Scaife's Hotel (now Symonds's) was a very fashionable establishment, and my aunt and uncle were what is called thorough business people, with a contempt for professions generally, and for the artistic in particular.

They simply thought my parents insane when the project of my embracing the disreputable calling was broached, and they said so. My uncle was a shrewd man of the world, without any of the vices that so often disfigure that character; and I quite believe a more honorable man never lived, and he was respected accordingly. His education had been more neglected than mine, the result being a difference of opinion with Lindley Murray, and a disregard of the aspirate—except where it should never be used—that was astounding.

Though my aunt and uncle disapproved of my possible artistic career as much, or more, than they approved of the auctioneering proposition, they heartily welcomed us to their home; indeed, to the last days of their lives they were kindness, even affection itself, to me. If in the course of my history I may touch on some of my uncle's peculiarities, I shall treat them as tenderly as if I loved them, as indeed I did.

The first step in my interest that it was necessary to take was to find Mr. Phillips, or some other eminent artist, upon whose verdict my fate—as agreed between me and my father—was to be decided. Sir L. Shadwell was away, so there was no way of approaching Mr. Phillips, whose title of R.A. created a sensation of awe in my father and of ridicule in my uncle.

"R.A., sir," said my uncle. "Why, they're as poor as rats, the lot of 'em. I know for a fact that ——," naming one of the most eminent animal-painters that ever lived, "never paid for a dead swan, or a deer, or something, that he got from that place in the New Road; and, what is more, he lodged for six weeks with a cousin of my 'ead-waiter, and ran away without paying a farthing. And that's the kind of thing you're going to bring your son up to!"

Another judge must be procured, as Mr. Phillips failed us; and my father soon found one in the person of a Mr. Partridge, who lived a few doors from my uncle's hotel: a portrait and history painter of reputation, and, what was more to our purpose, a friend of many of the members of the Royal Academy. Nothing less than the veto of a real R.A. would satisfy my father that I was unworthy of following the arts. Mr. Partridge looked at my drawings, and gave no opinion ; but he kindly allowed my father to leave the portfolio, telling him that the contents should be shown to the brothers Chalon, both academicians, who were engaged to visit him in the evening.

With what trepidation my father went to see Mr. Partridge the next morning, and with what an air of triumph he called on me to keep my promise, I well remember; as, indeed, I do the indifference I felt about the whole thing.

I may interpose for a moment here to complete the history of the Messrs. Chalon's influence, settling—as their judgment of my drawings that night did—my lifelong career. Many years after I was a Royal Academician, Mr. Alfred Chalon (his brother had died) was a guest at my house, and, on his paying me a passing compliment on a picture I had painted, I took the opportunity of thanking him for his favorable verdict at Mr. Partridge's, for, said I, "if it had not been for you I should not have been an artist at all." Chalon looked astonished, and then said, "Of course I knew Partridge, but I can remember nothing like what you charge me with." I tried to recall the circumstances to his memory. I described the drawings, told him the date of the transaction, but he could remember nothing of it. "What became of the drawings?" said Chalon. "I have them, many of them at least, and could show them to you." "I wish you would," was the reply; and the drawings were produced. The old artist looked long and carefully at them, evidently trying in vain to remember them; at last he said: "Do you mean to tell me that I ever saw those things before?" "Indeed you did." "And that I advised that you should be trained as an artist on such evidence as that?" "Indeed you did." "Then," said Chalon, "I ought to be ashamed of myself."

"Mr. Partridge wants to talk with you," said my father. "You will be delighted with him; he is one of the most elegant-mannered men I ever met—quite the gentleman—and he paints such lovely pictures. Why he isn't an R.A., I can't think."

"It's because he's too clever, sir," broke in my uncle. "Why, those painters are that jealous of one another, the wonder is the whole thing don't break down! And it will some day, Master William, just about the time that you are ready for it."

"Ah," said my father, "if I could live to see that day!"

"What day?" said my aunt, who had just joined us.

"Frith would like to see his son a R.A. at Somerset House, sooner than the head of such a business as Oxenham's," said my uncle. "That's the sort of day he wants to see, good Lord!"

If my father heard this, he never replied to it, but ordered me to go with him at once to Mr. Partridge, whom I found to fulfil all my father had said of him. His manners were delightful, copied, I was told afterwards, a good deal from those of Sir Thomas Lawrence; but nothing but real kindness of heart could have influenced him when he took great pains to instil into my immature mind some first principles of art, taking a bust—the Clytie, I think—as his text. I thought it was beautiful talk, but I didn't understand a syllable of it. Every word he said was miles high over my head. He talked, among other things, of "breadth." What on earth did he mean? In the light in which the bust was placed, he said, "Now see how broad the light and shade is." It didn't appear broad at all to me, in my sense of the word. Tone, too; what's tone? thought I. I know the tone of a fiddle, but what tone can come of that thing? But the word that puzzled me most was *chiaro-oscuro;* it sounded to me like a catch-word used by the conjurers whose performances I had seen at Harrogate. In short, I was thoroughly bewildered, and when he offered to lend me the bust to draw from, I fervently hoped it would get broken in its transit to my uncle's; but it did not. It was taken up into a bedroom. A drawing-board, paper, and chalk were given to me, and I was left alone with the dreadful thing.

I stared at it with a stare as stony as its own for some time, and then I tried to draw from it; to take its likeness, in fact. I could make nothing of it. I could *not* get my attempt to look in the least like a human head. I tried and tried—all in vain; so I put down my port-crayon and had a good cry, in the midst of which my father came into the room.

"What's the matter? can't you manage it?"

"No; I never could if I tried for a year."

"Well, never mind; give it up then. I want to tell you that I have just returned from the School of Art in Charlotte Street, Bloomsbury, kept by Mr. Sass, and have arranged for you to go there in a few days. He has a lot of pupils. He took me all over the place—splendid place—large gallery filled with casts—some like that, others big figures as large as life and larger: every means for the study of the profession, Mr. Sass says. You are to live in the house, board with the family, and I think you will be very comfortable. There is another in-door pupil older than you, 'very advanced,' Mr. Sass says."

"Is Mr. Sass a very gentlemanly man like Mr. Partridge? Does he talk as he did? What does he mean by the other boy being '*very advanced?*'"

This was rather a poser. After a few moments' thought, my father said:

"I suppose Mr. Sass meant the young man had got on a good deal in consequence of his teaching, which you can do if you like to work hard."

"I should like to go to the play, one of the big theatres; may I?"

"Well, we will see. You mustn't keep your uncle and aunt up late, you know."

There were some days to elapse before I should be consigned to the care of Mr. Sass, and the hard labor to which I felt I was condemned, and these were devoted to amusement. I was taken to the Adelaide Gallery, where a steam-gun discharged a hundred bullets every minute—a terrific weapon. The man who showed it gave a kind of lecture upon it; assured the audience that the Duke of Wellington came to see it the day before yesterday, and told the speaker that if he could have had the benefit of the steam-gun at the Battle of Waterloo, that engagement would have been over "in about half an hour, instead of lasting all day." He also said that all the regiments in our present army would be furnished with steam-guns, and it was expected in consequence that there would be no more fighting. The Adelaide Gallery and the steam-cannon are no more; the fighting continues.

And then the theatre. The first play I saw was Shakespeare's "King John." Macready was the King; Charles Kemble, Faulconbridge; Mrs. Warner, I think, Constance. Can I ever forget it, or my delight in it? My father quarrelled with a man who sat next us in the pit because he chose the moment when Constance moved the house to tears to disturb the silence—only broken by half-stifled sobs—by sucking an orange in a loud, slobbery fashion. When the queen retired, and the house was gradually resuming its equanimity, my father turned to his neighbor, and, wiping his own eyes, said:

"Well, you didn't seem to be affected by the acting of that scene like the rest of us."

"Why should I?" replied the man. "It isn't true; and if it was, it's nothing to me."

"You are a nice man to come to the play and disturb other people. Why can't you suck your oranges at home? you'd find it cheaper."

"Look here," said the man, opening a handkerchief and showing a nest of oranges, "I shall put away all those before I go; and if you object, you had better move into a private box."

My father's temper was short, like himself, and the quarrel grew till the audience interfered, and the call to both to "shut up" was obeyed. I shall not allow the fear of being charged with the *laudatur temporis acti* disposition to prevent me from asserting that no such acting as Macready's King John, or Kemble's Faulconbridge, can be seen on our stage now. Macready's fearful whisper—when, having placed his mouth close to Hubert's ear, and dropping his half-hearted hints of his desire for Arthur's death, he throws off the mask, and in two words, "*the grave*," he makes his wish unmistakable—was terrific: the two words were uttered in a whisper that could be heard at the back of Drury Lane gallery, and the effect was tremendous. You felt as if you were assisting at a terrible crime. The grace and gallantry of Faulconbridge, as Charles Kemble acted the character, were unapproachably delightful; and of the tone in which he repeated again and again to Austria, "And hang a calf-skin on those recreant limbs," no description can give an idea. Then his swagger into Angers after the famous scene which leads to the surrender of the town! I can see him now, as, with the elegant saunter appropriate to the character, he disappears under the portcullis, and, the place being new to him, he looks to the right and left with the insolence of a conqueror. His Mercutio, Don Felix, Cassio, Charles Surface, were simply perfect. My father was as fond of the play as I, and I was indulged till my uncle began to look a little black at our late hours.

I shall only mention one theatre more—that managed by Madame Vestris, then in the zenith of her beauty. I fell madly in love with her at once, and would have flown far away from Sass and the studio, as he called it (I was just sixteen), if I could have induced that lovely being to be my companion. It was at the Olympic, in Wych Street, where the enchantress held her nightly revels.

"Oh, father!" I remember exclaiming when she first burst upon the stage and me; "isn't she a beautiful creature?"

"Eh—what? You attend to the play and don't talk."

And there was Liston, and Oxberry, and Mrs. Orger, and Charles Mathews, whose first appearance I did not witness, for he had played three nights before I saw him, in "The Old and Young Stager"—Liston playing the old coachman with the many-caped coat, and Mathews a young groom, I think.

It is time for me to cease this holiday-talk, and go to work and to Sass's care, to which on one memorable evening I was confided. My father beguiled the walk down Brook Street, down Oxford Street, through Hanway Yard, along Great Russell Street, to my future home, with much fatherly warning and advice; I all the while wondering how much pocket-money he was going to allow me, how much money I was to be trusted with for ordinary expenses, whether I was to order and pay for my own clothes, etc. A feeling possessed me that I was afloat in the world, and that I ought to be trusted to manage my pecuniary affairs, for which I felt the capacity of chancellor of the exchequer. As nothing on the subject was volunteered by my father until we both stood on the doorstep of No. 6 Charlotte Street, under the bust of Minerva, which to this day looks down on the passer-by, I—being possessed at the moment of a very few shillings and a half-sovereign wrapped up in paper, on which my mother had written "A friend in need"—ventured to ask how much money he was going to give me for the many expenses I must incur beyond the sum paid for my board and lodging and tuition. I shall never forget my bitter disappointment at being told that I must get an account-book, into which every item of my expenditure must be entered; that I must be satisfied with £2, which he handed to me, and when that was accounted for to the satisfaction of my uncle, that treasurer would advance me £2 more. To a young person who expected to have the immediate control of a considerable income this was a blow, and I am ashamed to confess that I bore it so badly as to show my disappointment by bursting into tears—tears not drawn from me only by financial disappointment, but I would fain think as much, or more, by the pangs of separation. As we parted, my father kissed me—I can feel now the rough scrub of his shaven chin—and I passed under a roof which sheltered me for the following two years.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCHOOL OF ART.

Mr. Henry Sass was a student of the Royal Academy, and a contemporary of Wilkie, Mulready, Haydon, and many others less known to fame, all of whom continued his steadfast friends, supplying him now and again with pupils whose education those distinguished men were too busy to undertake. Though Mr. Sass thoroughly understood the principles of art, and could most efficiently inculcate them, he never succeeded in putting them satisfactorily into practice on his own account. His pictures were coldly correct, never displaying an approach to the sacred fire of genius, and almost always unsalable. Under these circumstances, and warned by an increasing family, Mr. Sass established his School of Art, at that time the only one existing. The duties of the school fully occupied the master's attention, leaving him time only to exhibit occasionally at Somerset House, and then only a small picture always called "A Study of a Head;" and even this modest contribution was not allowed to escape the malignity of the critics, one of whom, in his general notice of one of the annual exhibitions, said: "Mr. Sass continues to exhibit a study of something which he persists in calling a head."

It was the firm and settled conviction of my master that the neglect of the public, so unmistakably displayed towards his work, was the result of the dense ignorance of the so-called patrons of art; it was also his conviction that if he could have afforded to devote himself to the practice of art instead of the teaching of it, he could have grasped the highest honors of the profession. Dear old Sass! I think he was wrong. It ought to have been, and it was, a consolation to him to feel that by instilling his admirable principles into others he gave them ample means of achieving a success denied to himself. Many of his pupils became painters of high reputation, several were afterwards Academicians, and one and all, I feel sure, would, if death had not sealed so many lips, endorse all I have to say in favor of the admirable art-teaching of Henry Sass. I may mention here one distinguished man, my old friend Millais, who was Sass's pupil, though only for a short time, I think. His remarkable powers enabled him to enter the Royal Academy Schools *per saltum;* and I can well remember the amusement of the students—some of whom were then, as now, almost middle-aged men—when a little handsome boy, dressed in a long blue coat confined at the waist by a black leather band, walked into the Antique School and gravely took his place among us. This was my first sight of Millais, for I had left Sass's and become an R.A. student a year or two before the appearance of my young friend. But to return to my early work. In the opening lines of these reminiscences I have said that I hoped to point a moral, by which I meant that much that I might have to tell would be of use to future students, either in the form of warning or encouragement.

Reynolds says, "You must have no dependence on your own genius; if you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply the deficiency." Another writer says, "Genius means the power of taking great pains." I don't think either of those great men could have been quite serious, or could have intended their advice to be taken literally, but rather to enforce the absolute necessity of hard work. Would the severest application have produced a Raphael or a Hogarth? No. But neither Raphael nor Hogarth could have produced their immortal works without the exercise of painful industry; and when is the time for that exercise? In healthy youth — a time, alas! when temptation to idle pleasure is most difficult to resist. No artist who has arrived at mature age can look back at his early opportunities without a remorseful sense of his neglect of many of them. I can even accuse myself, fool that I was, of feeling contempt for the scrupulous attention insisted on by my master to details that seemed to my youthful wisdom to be absurdly unimportant. I know better now, and suffer justly for my folly.

Sass's course of study was very severe; my precious drawings were looked at and remarked upon by the master, to the best of my recollection, in the following words: "Ah, copies from Dutch prints! Shouldn't wonder if you turn out eventually to take to engraving. Whatever induced you to spend time in doing such things? Terrible waste. Can't have done you much harm if you can contrive to forget all about them. You will spend your evenings here in studying the compositions of Michael Angelo and other great artists. You will find a large collection in my library, but no Dutch prints."

The master had prepared with his own hand a great number of outlines from the antique, beginning with Juno's eye and ending with the Apollo — hands, feet, mouths, faces, in various positions, all in severely correct outline. The young student, beginning with Juno's eye, was compelled to copy outlines that seemed numberless; some ordered to be repeated again and again, till Mr. Sass could be induced to place the long-desired "*Bene*" at the bottom of them. This course, called "drawing from the flat," was persisted in till the pupil was considered advanced enough to be allowed to study the mysteries of light and shade. A huge white plaster ball, standing on a pedestal, was the next object of attention, by the representation of which in Italian chalk and on white paper the student was to be initiated into the first principles of light, shadow, and rotundity. The effect to be produced by a process of hatching. No stumps—objects of peculiar horror to our master—were allowed. Sass's hatred of the stump gave rise to a ribald but admirable caricature by one of the students, who drew the professor (a wonderful likeness of him) in the infernal regions, surrounded by boy demons (supposed to be old pupils cut off in their early career), tormenting him with stumps to all eternity. The drawing was carefully kept out of the master's sight, and well for the student it was, for his expulsion would certainly have followed any glimpse that irascible individual might have got of it.

I spent six weeks over that awful ball (the drawing exists still, a wonder of line-work), the result being a certain amount of modelling knowledge very painfully acquired. Then came a gigantic bunch of plaster grapes, intended to teach differences of tone (I soon learned what tone meant) in a collection of objects, with the lights and shadows and reflections peculiar to each. How I hated and despised this second and, I thought, most unnecessary trial of my patience! but it was to be done, and I did it. Then permission was given for an attempt at a fragment from the antique in the form of a hand. Thus step by step I advanced, till I was permitted to draw from the entire figure. How I regret that I did not exert myself to draw more figures and more carefully! but the severity tried me very much, and I felt very weary and indifferent. I could feel no interest in what I was about. Perspective bewildered me, and to this day I know little or nothing about that dreadful science; and anatomy and I parted after a very short and early acquaintance. I am relating the true history of my early days, and it must be borne in mind that for the kind of art I have practised, very little perspective and anatomy are required; but the neglect with which I treated those acquirements would be fatal to the artist who may be pursuing the highest branch of art.

All my evenings were passed in making outlines from Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment," the wonderful cartoon of Pisa, and other work from that immortal hand, together with studies from other old masters — Guercino, the Caracci, Poussin, and the like. After two years' working from the antique—I can scarcely call it study, so ever to be regrettedly perfunctory were my doings—I was allowed "to try for the Academy;" and to my surprise and the astonishment of my master, I was admitted as probationer. But before I tell of my experience in that capacity, I will try to describe the school and students at Sass's as they existed in the reign of that professor. A door on the left, as you entered the house, opened upon a passage shut off by curtains at the bottom of it from a large circular hall lighted from the top, in which were placed, in an angle of light copied from the Pantheon at

Rome, statues, the size of the originals, of the Laocoön, the Apollo, the Venus de Medici, and other famous antique works. The passage through which the gallery was entered was lined with drawings done by favorite and successful pupils. Facing the passage at the bottom of the gallery was a staircase leading to an upper school, much smaller than the lower gallery, but built precisely on the same plan — circular — and lighted *à la* Pantheon, heated by hot-water pipes "hermetically sealed." Below the upper gallery were small studios occupied by private pupils, of whom I can only remember one, the late Sir William Knighton, sent to the school by Wilkie, and afterwards an assistant of that great painter in some of the details of his works. Old students at Sass's, several of whom are living, will remember his description of the angle of forty-five degrees copied from the lighting of the Pantheon at Rome, the hermetical sealing of the water-pipes, and the rest of it, which he repeated to succeeding visitors, friends, or parents of pupils, always exactly in the same words; and how droll it was to hear him go through his first instructions to new pupils in precisely the same manner, words, intonation, everything, as he had administered them to yourself only a week or two before! Hogarth's well-known illustration of the power of single lines he invariably inflicted on the new proselyte at the moment he thought it most appropriate, always at the same point in a given lesson.

"Now to illustrate what I say, I shall draw a soldier, his gun, and his dog in three lines," and he proceeded to do it thus: "There is the public-house door," making a perpendicular line; "there is the man's gun," making a stroke at his favorite angle near the top of the door; "and there is the dog's tail," making a little curve near the bottom of the straight line; ending his lecture always by the words, "Don't laugh; there is nothing to laugh at." This was invariably said, whether the student laughed or not.

Mr. Sass, like many other folks, had his peculiarities; he was somewhat passionate, and knowing that his passion, unless checked, would betray him into unseemly violence, he made it a rule to retire instantly from the cause of offence, and force himself to pause a few moments before he resented it, which he then did with dignified severity. To illustrate this, I recall an incident in which I unconsciously offended. An eclipse of the sun took place, and the young Sasses and I went on to the roof of the house by means of a trap-door, to look at the sun through bits of smoked glass. I was enjoying the sight, and at the same time breaking the tiles with my feet, when I was interrupted by what seemed to be a fearful oath. I looked down just in time to see the rapidly descending head of my master. I saw the cause of the explosion, and waited in trepidation for the return of the head. In about two minutes it slowly reappeared, and stopped where it was on a level with the broken tiles. "Did it strike you, Frith—it ought to have struck you, and if it had knocked you down I should have been pleased—that you were destroying the roof of my house in your absurd— Henry!"—suddenly seeing his son's shoes had been also destructive—"why, you confound—" and down went the head again, and more calming time was required and taken, the *finale* being an announcement that Henry's pocket-money should suffer for his misdoings, and my father's purse for mine. Reflection must have softened the ireful decision, for I never heard any more of it.

Sass's veneration for the antique amounted almost to worship, and anything like an insult—and a very small matter took that shape in his eyes—was fiercely resented. On one occasion I left some dirty paint-brushes on the plinth on which the Apollo stood. Sass threw them to the ground, and quietly told me "if such conduct occurred again, my immediate expulsion would follow." Though Mr. Sass was well-educated and a gentleman, he was, as I have shown, subject to attacks of excitement and irritability from influences sometimes so slight as to cause surprise in those who had unwittingly made him angry; his language then became curiously involved, ungrammatical, and often incomprehensible.

One of his pupils, a light-headed, careless young fellow, who had annoyed the master by his conduct, received a reprimand in the following words addressed to the whole school: "Gentlemen, I was at the lecture at the Royal Academy last night, where I met Wilkie, and he said to me, 'Sass, you could teach a stone to draw;' and so IT IS, but I can't teach that C—— anything."

On another occasion, when he was instructing us in the true way of producing the harmony that should exist in works of art between the figures in a picture and their background, thinking he detected a sneer on C——'s face, he said, turning to C——, and pointing to one of his own works, "YOU," with tremendous emphasis on the word, "won't believe *me;* perhaps you will believe Sir Thomas Lawrence, who said when he looked at that picture, 'What a wonderful "*harmonious*"*!* How is it produced?'"

While I was in school there were two expulsions: one in the person of a youth from Jersey, who, in spite of a notice in large letters always visible to him, that "Silence is indispensable in a place devoted to study," persisted in singing French songs in a piercingly shrill voice, and in laughing at Mr. Sass; and singing louder than ever when the professor disappeared. The other discharged student was my old friend Jacob Bell, so well known afterwards as the intimate and valued friend of Sir Edwin Landseer, the purchaser of so many of that great artist's works, and, I may add, of my "Derby Day," all eventually bequeathed by him to the National Gallery.

Bell went through the drawing from the flat with much tribulation, and at last began the fearful plaster ball, in the representation of which he had advanced considerably; but he also had arrived at the limit of his patience, and on one fatal Monday morning, after witnessing an early execution at Newgate, he drew the scaffold and the criminal hanging on it, in the centre of the ball. We were grouped round the artist listening to an animated account of the murderer's last moments when Sass appeared.

The crowd of listeners ran to their seats and waited for the storm. Mr. Sass looked at the drawing, and went out of the studio—a pin might have been heard to drop. Bell looked round and winked at me. Sass returned, and walked slowly up to Mr. Jacob Bell, and addressed him as follows: "Sir, Mr. Bell; sir, your father, placed you under my care for the purpose of making an artist of you. I can't do it; I can make nothing of you. I should be robbing your father *if I did it.* You had better go, sir; such a career as this," pointing to the man hanging, "is a bad example to your fellow-pupils. You must *leave, sir!*"

"All right," said Bell, and away he went, returning to the druggist's shop established by his father in Oxford Street, where he made a large fortune, devoting it mainly to the encouragement of art and artists, and dying prematurely, beloved and regretted by all who knew him.

It is reported of his father, a rigid Quaker, who watched with disapproval his son's purchases of pictures, that he said to him one day:

"What business hast thou to buy those things, wasting thy substance?"

"I can sell any of *those things* for more than I gave for them, some for twice as much."

"Is that verily so?" said the old man. "Then I see no sin in thy buying more."

When Bell first appeared at Sass's, he wore the Quaker coat; but finding that the students showed their disapproval in a marked and unpleasant manner—such, for instance, as writing "Quaker" in white chalk across his back—he discarded that vestment, and very soon afterwards was himself discarded by the Quakers. His dismissal happened in this wise. At "meeting" the men sit on one side of the chapel, and the women on the other. Bell disliked this arrangement, and, finding remonstrance of no avail, he disguised himself in female attire, and took his place in the forbidden seats. For a time all went well, but a guilty conscience came into play on seeing two of the congregation speaking together and eying him suspiciously the while; he took fright, and, catching up his petticoats, he went out from "meeting" with a stride that proclaimed his sex. For this he was, as I have heard him tell many a time, expelled from the community.

To return once more to Sass's.

Besides the warning notice that had so little effect on the musical student, there were many other pieces of advice distributed around and about the gallery in motto fashion, one or two of which I particularly recollect: "Those models which have passed through the approbation of ages are intended for your imitation, and not your criticism;" "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed;" "*Laborare est orare*," and so on. I don't think the motto system did us any good. Upon greater familiarity grew greater contempt, and the wise sayings lost their influence, if they ever had any. Very few of the contemporaries of my student-days have left any "footprints on the sands of time." Many of them died young; others, after becoming students of the Royal Academy, drifted, disappointed, away from artistic life into more congenial and profitable pursuits.

Edward Lear, afterwards well known as the author of a child's book called "A Book of Nonsense," was one who became an intimate friend of mine, as well as fellow-student. He is still living, I believe, somewhere in Italy. Lear was a man of varied and great accomplishments, a friend of Tennyson's, whose poetry he sang charmingly to music of his own composing. As a landscape-painter he had much merit; but misfortune in the exhibition of his pictures pursued him, as it has done so many others, and at last, I fear, drove him away to try his fortune elsewhere. There were two men named Savage, one very dark, the other very fair. We called the one black, and the other white, Savage. I cannot recall even the names of more than two others. The first—how much the first in all respects!—was Douglas Cowper, a fair, handsome, delicate youth who possessed powers which, if rapid consumption followed by death before he was twenty-one had not cut short his bright and happy life, would have speedily placed him in the first rank of his profession. His matchless application, his delight even in the driest parts of his training, and the rapidity of his improvement, were matters of envy and astonishment to all of us. He was the master's favorite pupil, and often held up to us in his presence as an example to Mr. C—— and others, among whom I must place myself. Cowper's course was very rapid. He became a student of the Royal Academy, gained medals in all the schools, succeeded at once in painting pictures in which he displayed (of course in a comparatively immature manner) refinement, extreme sensibility to female beauty, appreciation of character—in short, every quality that can adorn a picture. Finding disease increase upon him, he went abroad, became worse, and returned home to die. The other, Benjamin Aplin Newman Green, my fellow in-door pupil, was as different from Cowper as it was possible for one human being to be from another. A good-natured, foolish creature, without the least ability as an artist; but a great worshipper of Byron, most of whose poems he could repeat by heart, to my sorrow, for our evenings were perforce nearly always spent together, and the study of Michael Angelo was difficult enough without constant interruptions from the "Corsair" and the "Bride of Abydos." Poor Green was the butt of the school. The more advanced students worked in the lower gallery, and no sooner did the monotonous tones of Green's voice reach us in the upper studio, than, armed with bread-crusts, we quietly descended the stairs, and before he had got further in his recitation than

> "O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
> Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,"

a shower of bread, crust or crumb, according to what was at our disposal (after using it for error-erasing in our drawings), put a temporary stop to the infliction. On one occasion I remember my own aim being diverted by the sudden apparition of the professor, who passed through the curtains of the passage at the moment of attack, and the result was a smart blow in the middle of the august waistcoat instead of the spot intended. I went back to my work and waited. In a minute Sass appeared in the upper gallery with the crust in his hand.

"Who did this?" said he.

"I threw it, sir; but it was not intended for you."

"For whom was it intended, sir?"

"For Mr. Green."

"Then never dare to presume to throw bread at me again. If I ever discover you guilty of such unexampled conduct, I will," etc., etc.

From Mr. Sass's family, with whom as in-door pupil I was in constant intercourse, I received the greatest kindness. Mrs. Sass was a mother to me in the best sense of the word ; and it was a wondering pleasure to me to see so many of the great men of that day, whose like we shall not look upon again. I was sitting with the family in the drawing-room one evening, a little reading and music going on, when Mr. Wilkie was announced. Mr. Sass went to meet him, and tried to induce him to stay; but the great painter was not, or did not think himself, in presentable evening costume, and, besides, he was in a great hurry. He was very tall, and wore a long blue cloak. The Sass family, of course, he knew, and I was pointed out to him as "one of my pupils who has just finished his drawing for the Academy."

"Varra weel," said Wilkie, the Scotch vernacular being very marked.

Mr. Sass was accustomed to give a series of *conversazioni*, at which great artists and other distinguished men were present. Etty, Martin (certainly one of the most beautiful human beings I ever beheld), and Constable were frequent visitors. We had dinners and dances, too. Who that had once seen Wilkie dance a quadrille could ever forget the solemnity of the performance ! Every step was done with a conscientious precision that pointed to the recent dancing-master. "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," seemed to be expressed in every movement ; and then the courtly grace with which he bowed to his partner and led her to her seat ! *Autre temps, autre mœurs.* We never see such sights nowadays.

I assisted at one memorable dinner. The guests were Eastlake, Constable, Wilkie, Etty—Chantry, I think—and others whom I forget. I sat between Eastlake and Constable. The only words addressed to me were by Eastlake, and they were to the effect that a sugar erection on the table near us was like a Grecian temple; didn't I think so ? I was too frightened to reply. Wilkie talked a great deal, but quite over my head ; and on the conversation turning upon how far ignorant opinion was valuable on pictures, Constable maintained that it was worthless, as he believed was Molière's housekeeper's judgment on literary work. To illustrate his opinion he gave the following example: A nobleman (whose name I forget) had commissioned Constable to paint a landscape of a beautiful part of the country surrounding a certain castle, the seat of the noble lord. The picture was to be both a landscape and a portrait of the castle, and a large summer-house was allotted as a studio for the painter, who made many studies, and, indeed, painted one or two pictures from adjacent scenery. The walls of the summer-house had been newly covered with a gorgeous paper representing flowers, trees, rocks, etc. On this wall hung an empty gold frame, and Constable declared that the gardener, whose opinion he had asked upon his work generally, after making a variety of idiotic remarks, said, looking at the empty frame hanging on the wall—through which the wall-paper appeared as a picture—"*That's* a lovely pictur', sir; that's more finished, that is; more what I like."

Undoubtedly Constable was one of the greatest landscape-painters that ever lived, second only to Turner, the greatest of all. He was an embittered, disappointed man, and with reason; for while artists of far inferior talent sold their pictures readily and for large sums, Constable was neglected and unpopular. The works of a landscape and sea painter of great eminence, whose name I suppress, were sometimes open to the charge of a certain *putty*-like texture, and the fact that Constable had expressed his opinion that "Blank's" pictures were "like putty" reached the artist's ears; and upon some occasion soon after, when Constable praised a certain picture of his, "Blank" immediately retorted:

"Why, I am told you say my pictures are like putty!"

"Well," said Constable, "what of that? I like putty."

Constable died very suddenly in the year 1837. He had retired to rest in his usual health, and was found dead in the morning. I fear there are few men now living who can remember Dr. Herring's account of the effect of Constable's sudden death upon two painters named Wilkins, both very short, very stout men, who, to use Dr. Herring's words, "wore the calves of their legs in front," each possessing larger corporations than are commonly seen. They were pompous men, and carried their calves and their stomachs very much *en évidence.*

One of them painted pictures of dead game, and on Herring admiring a group of dead rabbits and praising the natural appearance of them, Wilkins said, in his loud, unctuous, pompous tone,

"*Nature,* sir. Yes, I flatter myself there is more nature in those rabbits than you *usually see* in rabbits."

One of the Wilkinses hearing of Constable's death, hurried home with the news. He walked up to his brother, their corporations almost meeting.

"William, what do you think?" giving his brother a butt with his stomach.

"I *don't* know," returning the push.

"*Constable's dead!*" a violent effort of corporation following, which sent the brothers for the moment a little back from each other.

"*Constable dead!*" said William, in accents of incredulity and consternation, and with a tremendous return of the stomach charge.

"Yes!" with a butt.

"No!" with return butt. "Not *dead!*" butt.

"Yes, DEAD!" return butt.

And they continued exclaiming and butting at each other until their surprise and consternation ceased.

After my admission as a student of the Royal Academy—that is to say, after more than two years' hard work at drawing—I was allowed to take my first step in painting, and I returned to Sass's for that purpose. Here, again, the system was admirable. A simple antique model was put up before the student, who, provided with brushes, and black and white paint only on his palette, was told to copy it in monochrome. I date my first real pleasure in my work from that moment. After the tedious manipulation of Italian chalk, the working with the brush was delightful, and the result seemed so much more satisfactorily like the object imitated than was possible by the former method. No sooner did I feel the fascination of the brush than I burned to try my hand at nature in some form or other. I begged to be permitted to paint a head from life. I was told I was just as fit to command the Channel Fleet as to paint a head from nature. "You would wreck the ships, sir, and you would only spoil good canvas if you had your will." So I was made to copy copies of the old masters till I began to feel a dangerous and rebellious spirit growing up within me, and at last I told my master I would *copy no more.* Oliver "asking for more" did not produce a greater effect upon Mr. Bumble than did my audacity on Mr. Sass. He could not trust himself to reply until the usual retirement had taken place. He then said, very calmly, "You are too great a man for me; you want no more instruction; I am useless. I will write to your father and tell him there is no necessity for you to remain here any longer; your friends expect you to be a second Wilkie. I can't make Wilkies; and if I could, I should not make the experiment out of such material as you." This was disheartening; but I knew the good old fellow would not write to my father, and would soon forget all about my impertinence. The matter was compromised by my doing one copy more, and then being allowed to arrange and paint a group of still life.

My first attempt from nature still exists. It consists of a brown jar, a wicker Florence oil-bottle, and an old inkstand.

I no longer regretted the easy life, or what I thought such, of the auctioneer. I felt real enjoyment in my work, a feeling which has possessed me from that day to this in ever-increasing strength. The Sass boys were handsome enough and patient enough for models, and from one of them I painted my first exhibited picture. I sent it to the British Gallery (then existing in Pall Mall under the name of the British Institution), and to my great delight my picture, which was called "A Page with a Letter," was *hung* at the *top* of the room. And what airs I gave myself! How superior I felt and looked to those who had been less fortunate than myself! But I anticipate. Long before I could persuade my master to let me try my hand at his son I had dreadful fights with him about the method I persisted in adopting, which was to go to the streets for any striking character I could persuade to place himself, or herself, under my "'prentice hand." Though I had painted many groups of still life, all of which had passed under the criticism of my master, he still insisted that I should paint a composition of still-life objects, ignoring all I had done. This forgetfulness seemed strange; indeed, it was one of the first signs of the mental trouble that afterwards terminated in insanity. Another sign of the near approach of that dreadful disease may be mentioned. The cartoons of Raphael were then preserved in one of the galleries at Hampton Court Palace; and it was a custom of Mr. Sass's to take a selection of his pupils by coach to the palace, where he gave a sort of lecture in the presence of the cartoons. He always made us remove our hats on entering the room, and then, in solemn tones, as if he were at church, he would expatiate on the wonders before him. I well remember the last journey I made to Hampton Court. It was on a beautiful summer's morning, and the students occupied all the outside seats of the coach; Sass sitting beside the coachman, I, with my friend Abraham Solomon (a young man of great ability, who died early), sitting immediately behind our master and the coachman. Sass talked incessantly, to the amusement of the coachman, who evidently attributed his excitement to a common cause. We, who knew the professor's temperate habits too well to be able to account for it in that way, soon had a proof that our more terrible suspicions were only too well grounded. Sass suddenly turned to Solomon and said,

"Why don't you wear a Gibus hat?"

Solomon had never thought of doing so, and said he "didn't see why he should."

"*Why!*" said poor Sass. "I'll soon tell you *why*. You can put it into your pocket when you have done with it; if you sit upon it you can't hurt it; you just touch a spring and it shuts up. They are first-rate things, and I shall never wear any other."

On this particular day Mr. Sass wore a white beaver, about as unlike a Gibus as it could possibly be. Solomon then said,

"Well, sir, then why don't you wear one yourself?"

"I do," said Sass; "this is one. Do you doubt it? I see you do. Then just look here. Coachman, get up a moment." The coachman got up as desired, and the hat was placed on his seat. He sat down upon it and split it in every direction. "There," said Sass, "I hope you are satisfied that I do wear a Gibus." And wear his so-called Gibus he did the rest of the day in its battered condition, and became a laughing-stock in consequence.

After seeing the cartoons it was the custom to go upon the river, and on this occasion our master wished to dispense with a waterman and row us himself. This we declined, so he refused to go with us, and insisted on having a boat to himself; and, in spite of our remonstrance and opposition, the adventurous oarsman pushed off, and, though it was evident he had never attempted rowing before, he managed to paddle his boat into the middle of the stream, where its motions became so eccentric and alarming that its poor tenant grew frightened, and called out loudly for help, which speedily reached him.

Soon after this more unmistakable evidences of a disturbed mind showed themselves, such, for instance, as his ordering great quantities of goods—for which he could have no possible use—from various unsuspecting tradesmen, strangers to him; and his purchasing quite a collection of atrociously bad pictures, blocking up the passages and staircases of his house with these and all sorts of other utterly unnecessary articles. One more most convincing and melancholy sign of the sad affliction that had come upon him occurred one evening. He was sitting over the fire with an old friend, who told him a very good story, which, for the instant, he seemed capable of thoroughly appreciating and enjoying; but after a few minutes had elapsed, apparently quite forgetful of when and where he had heard it, he told the same story over again, as something entirely fresh, to the friend who had only just recounted it to him. Almost immediately after this incident restraint became compulsory, and "The School of Art, Bloomsbury," under Mr. Sass's management, closed forever.

Before finally taking leave of Mr. Sass I desire to bear testimony to his great qualities as a teacher and to his amiable disposition as a man. Personally, I feel I owe everything to him and his teaching; and there are some of my brother academicians now living who, I feel sure, would endorse my verdict on our dear old teacher.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIFE SCHOOL.

Though I would gladly have bid adieu to antique drawing, I found that if I desired to reach the upper school at the R.A., where painting was taught, I could only do so by *drawings* which must meet the approval of the council. I succeeded, after several futile attempts, in achieving these, and then I was permitted to draw in the Life School. There the whole thing was delightful to me. The academicians were visitors—one of the august forty sitting with us the prescribed two hours, rarely drawing, oftener reading. In those days scarcely ever *teaching.* How different to the present "manners and customs"! The Life School, or, in other words, the school of the nude model, was at that time held in what the students called the "pepper-box," namely, the centre cupola of the now National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. It was a circular room, and the model was posed on one side of it—an extended semicircle of students working opposite. Dead silence reigned. Strange scenes sometimes occurred. Some of our models were splendid guardsmen. One, named Brunskill, was a special favorite, from his magnificent physique, and his extraordinary endurance of painful attitudes. He was usually perfectly sober, because he knew well that one lapse from that condition would put an end to his career as a Royal Academy model.

I well remember his last appearance. He was late—a great sin in a model—and, what was worse, he had evidently been drinking. His attitude was that of a sailor pushing a boat from the shore. He had a heavy oar, with which he thrust against an impediment meant to represent a rock.

I was almost under the man, and had a very difficult piece of foreshortening to contend with, and was doing my best to master it, when the model said,

"I can't do it. I ain't fit to do it. This 'ere thing what I hold ain't right. Nothing's right; so I wish you gentlemen good-night. There now!"

It was "good-night" to us, and "good-bye" to Brunskill, for he was never allowed to sit again. Some months after this, when Mr. Jones, R.A., was visitor, an incident occurred which may interest my readers, if I ever have any. (*Par parenthèse,* I may say of Mr. Jones that he was chiefly known as a painter of military pictures, and in dress and person he so much resembled the great Duke of Wellington that, to his extreme delight, he was often mistaken for that hero, and saluted accordingly. On this coming to the ears of the duke, he said, "Dear me. Mistaken for me, is he? That's strange, for no one ever mistakes me for Mr. Jones.")

This anecdote was told by me to my old friend Edmund Yates, who relates it in his delightful reminiscences.

But, to return to the Jones incident. A female model was the sitter, and was placed with her back to the students, half leaning, half reclining, in an attitude full of grace. I had arrived late, and was compelled to take the only vacant seat at the end of the semicircle, from which I had a view of the model's profile. The face was new to me; the attitude seemed a very easy one. I was, therefore, surprised to see tears slowly falling down the model's cheek. I thought I ought to draw the attention of the visitor to the fact, and did so. "Oh, no!" said Mr. Jones; "she can't be in pain; no. I think I know what distresses her. Take no notice. Go on with your work."

The next night the sitting was repeated, but the tears were not, and I thought little more about the matter. A few months after this a very modest, respectable-looking girl was sent to me by a friend as a model, and I engaged her at once for a picture I had just commenced. I found the girl was the daughter of a tailor in a very small way of business, and that she was in every particular a thoroughly respectable person. It was not till after two or three sittings, and on looking again and again at her profile, that it struck me that I had seen the tears coursing each other down it in the Life School.

"Surely, Miss B——, I cannot be mistaken; you sat for Mr. Jones at the Royal Academy?" She blushed terribly, and tears came again. "Now tell me why you did such a thing?"

"I did it," said she, "to prevent my father going to prison. He owed three pounds ten, and if he couldn't have paid it by that Saturday night he was to be arrested. The Academy paid me three guineas for the week, and saved him. I never sat in that way before, and I never will again;" and I believe she never did.

She is at the present time in a position of life far beyond anything she could have aspired to. She is a mother and a grandmother, and no one has any idea that she sat for the nude figure to save her father from prison. I desire to say as little as possible on a disagreeable subject; but attempts have been made now and again to prevent the study of the female nude. If the well-meaning objectors knew half as much as I do of the subject they would hesitate before they charge a small section of the community with immorality which exists only in the imagination of the accusers. I declare I have known numbers of *perfectly respectable* women who have sat constantly and habitually for the nude, and, if even it were unfortunately otherwise, we painters could not do without them. Many men draw every figure naked in their compositions before they clothe them. I did so for years, and ought to do so now. Then, again, if the nude female figure had always been denied to artists, such statues as the Venus of Milo—the delight and wonder of the world—could not have been executed. Numbers of great works of the old and modern masters would never have seen the light, and generations of their worshippers would have been deprived of exquisite pleasure and untold improvement.

One more little story of the Life School, and I have done with it. Sir Edwin Landseer was visitor—the only instance of his filling the office in my time. He was a very fashionable personage, and we all rather wondered at seeing him willing to spend evenings, usually devoted to high society, in the service of the Life School. He read the whole time; and one evening a very old gentleman in list-slippers, with a speaking-trumpet under his arm, shuffled into the school. This was John Landseer, an eminent engraver, an associate of the Academy, and father of Edwin Landseer, whom he greatly resembled. His son rose to meet him, with the book he had been reading in his hand.

"You are not drawing, then; why don't you draw?" said the old man, in a loud voice.

"Don't feel inclined," shouted the son down the trumpet.

"Then you ought to feel inclined. That's a fine figure; get out your paper and draw."

"Haven't got any paper," said the son.

"What's that book?" said the father.

"'Oliver Twist,'" said Edwin Landseer, in a voice loud enough to reach Trafalgar Square.

"Is it about art?"

"No; it's about Oliver Twist."

"Let me look at it. Ha! it's some of Dickens' nonsense, I see. You'd much better draw than waste your time upon such stuff as that."

This amused the students, who tittered, and deepened the frowns that had been gathering through the interview on the brow of the great animal-painter, and added to the strained condition that already existed between him and the students; for Landseer nearly always came late, and kept us waiting outside the door of the school while he was placing the model in what we thought a purposely aggravating way. The night after the interview I have related the delay outside was so prolonged that we stamped and knocked in the manner common to a crowd waiting in the gallery of a theatre for the actors to appear.

The result of this riotous proceeding was that, in obedience to a written order posted up in the hall on the next evening, we were compelled to remain below till the bell summoned us to mount the numberless stairs to the "pepper-box." Which of the students was guilty of writing the word "Humbug" in large capitals across the obnoxious order I never knew, nor indeed did I know that it had been done till Mr. Jones, who was then keeper of the Academy and the head of all the schools, walked into the Life School with the order in his hand. He took his place with his back to the model, and addressed us thus: "Gentlemen—I use that word in addressing you collectively, but there is one person among you who has no claim to the appellation — I hold in my hand evidence of vulgar insubordination. I am sorry to think that an act which must have been witnessed by some of you was not prevented before it was perpetrated. I seek not, gentlemen, to discover the author of this insult, for, if I knew him, it would be my painful duty to pursue him to his expulsion," etc.

Landseer lived at least thirty years after this, but was never visitor again. About this time two young men became students of the Academy who were destined to play very important parts in the world. John Phillip, who became an academician, and one of the finest painters of the English or any other school, and Richard Dadd, his intimate friend and future brother-in-law, a man of genius that would assuredly have placed him high in the first rank of painters had not a terrible affliction darkened one of the noblest natures and brightest minds that ever existed, and eventually put an end to all the hopes that were entertained for his future. I cannot go into details that would be distressing to me to relate and to the survivors of my unhappy friend to read. Suffice it to say that the noble mind is destroyed, though the body still survives. I would rather recall Dadd as I knew him in the happy days of long ago, when he and Phillip, O'Neil, Elmore, Ward, Egg (all gone!), and some others, formed a band of followers full of the spirit of emulation, love for our art and one another. As to jealousy of each other, I can truly say the feeling never crossed my mind, nor do I believe it existed among us at all. We met together constantly, formed a sketching-club, criticised and abused each other's works whenever we thought they deserved chastisement. We were not in the least a mutual-admiration society, like that which is said to exist among a certain class at the present time.

I must now return to the period when I entered the Life Academy, and found my friend Douglas Cowper at work there. He was far in advance of me in every way, and had already begun to paint subjects, illustrations of Scott and Shakespeare; and, what was most wonderful to me, the pictures were sold! for very small prices, certainly; but they *were* sold.

"Why don't you give up painting heads," said he to me, "and try your hand at a composition of two or three figures?"

"Because I should make a mess of it," said I; and as I made a very deplorable mess of a composition which I attempted many months afterwards—having in the meantime gone through a course of portrait-painting—I should only have disgusted myself beyond endurance by so premature an effort as Cowper proposed.

CHAPTER VI.

PRACTICE IN PORTRAIT-PAINTING.

I HAD quitted Sass's for good, and was practising, I still think, in the right way, viz., by painting any one whom I could persuade to sit to me; and among those who had patience to go through this ordeal were my uncle and aunt Scaife and several of their friends. That anybody would be fool enough to pay money for my performances never entered my mind; but, to my delight, one day an old gentleman, who had seen a portrait of one of my uncle's friends, offered me five pounds if I would make as good a likeness of him as I had done of my other victim. I tried, succeeded, and received my first money reward for "work and labor done." This old gentleman's daughter was governess in a family in Lincolnshire, and the owner of the family, happening to be in London, saw the portrait of his governess's father, and was so struck with the likeness that he asked me if I could go to his house to paint himself, and "others, he had no doubt, would follow suit"—price five pounds for a head, ten for a kit-cat, fifteen for a half-length—always the size of life. I started full of hope and interest, and found myself in the midst of most agreeable society, welcomed everywhere, and with as much work as I could do. The way of it was this: I went from house to house, chiefly among the higher class of gentlemen farmers, staying as long as my work lasted; sometimes flirting with the young ladies, who thought painting "oh, such a beautiful art!" flattering their mothers—in their portraits, I mean—and, I verily believe, making myself a general favorite everywhere.

"Pickwick" was being published at this time in monthly parts, taking the town and country by storm; and as each number appeared—to beguile the tedium of the sitting—it was read by the wife of one of my sitters, who was a jolly portly man, not unlike Mr. Pickwick himself. Mrs. N—— (the wife) was a very serious lady indeed, religious, I believe, in the truest sense of the word; but certainly a very depressing person, without a particle of fun, or the least sense of humor, in her composition. Anything funnier, however, than her reading of "Pickwick" could not be conceived. Every sentence was uttered in precisely the tones she used when she read morning and evening prayers, and I need scarcely say that that method of elocution, excellent as it was for the one purpose, became ludicrous in the extreme when adopted for the other. If my reader will take the trouble to imagine the following speech of Mr. Weller's—"You would change your note if you know'd who was near you, as the hawk remarked to hisself with a cheerful laugh, as he heard the robbing red breast a-singing round the corner"—delivered in the manner affected by the severest of the Low-Church clergymen, an idea may be formed of the result upon me, and even upon my jolly sitter, whose solemn "Amen" after it I can never forget.

After finishing my work at the N——s', I betook myself, bag and baggage, to a neighboring farmhouse, where fresh faces awaited my attention. The Grange was a large farm, held under Lord Yarborough by a Mr. F——, who possessed a pretty little wife and a small old mother-in-law, whose characteristic countenance made me long to paint it.

In her youth, Mrs. B——, who was the widow of a bluff sea-captain of Hull, had been a great beauty. She was now very old, and among her other eccentricities had a habit of thinking aloud, and invariably on the same subject—personal appearance. Very embarrassing, because any new face was sure to produce an immediate criticism, favorable or the reverse. I arrived very late at the Grange, and was shown into the drawing-room, where a young clergyman was reading prayers, and the visitors and family were kneeling in various directions. The old lady was allowed to pray sitting, seemingly; and when I appeared and immediately knelt down with the rest, she interrupted the clergyman by some words which I did not catch, but, judging from the shaking of several of the worshippers' shoulders, and the great difficulty the reader had in going on with the service, they evidently were of a droll tendency. It was not till the next day that Mr. F—— explained the situation. The fact was that no sooner did the old lady catch sight of me, than she exclaimed: "Well! *he's* no beauty."

She was an amusing sitter. With regard to her own portrait, she was only anxious that a large miniature likeness of her husband, which she wore as a brooch, should be faithfully rendered. "Oh, mister!" she said; "you haven't caught the captain's eye. It was a *beautiful blue*, not like *that;* THAT'S GREEN!"

She was, however, quite content with my rendering of her own delightful old face—her cheeks streaked like a winter apple; and she was apparently quite indifferent to the departed loveliness of her youth. Very unlike, in that respect, many old ladies I have painted since, most of whom have seemed possessed with the idea that time had stood still for fifty years; and that the face over which seventy or eighty summers and winters had passed was very much the same as the one with which they were familiar in their teens. I could furnish proofs of what I have just written that would startle the incredulous as much as the facts startled me. Among my sitters in those days was an old clergyman, whose daughters were most anxious that his portrait should be painted. He had been a chaplain in the navy, and—singular perhaps for a parson—always wore a long blue coat, buttoned to the throat; the black ribbon of his pince-nez meandering across a chest puffed and smooth, in unmistakable imitation of George IV. He was very old, and very upright—of a spare, tall figure. A Sir Charles Grandison in courtesy, but hated sitting with an intensity I have rarely seen equalled.

I believe that the fight that went on between his desire to please his daughters and his dislike of sitting shortened his life. He was of a bilious temperament, and after he had been sitting a short time, a flush spread over his face, succeeded by a yellow patchiness (between both of which I had to steer a middle course), plainly showing a painfully disturbed condition of his system. To amuse him, I placed a large looking-glass in such a position as to enable him to see each touch as it was put on. I was hard at work at the blue coat, the plain, pigeon-breasted appearance of which I was modifying by a few creases, when I saw my sitter give a violent tug at the front of the garment. I went on with my creases, however, successfully as I thought, breaking up the mass of monotonous blue, until the old gentleman, apparently unable to bear it any longer, jumped up and came behind me, exclaiming : "My dear sir, I never, *never* wear my coat like that ! I could not endure such a coat—it does not fit me ! Pray remove those marks !"

And removed they were, and the coat is creaseless to this day. I spent four months at that time painting portraits in Lincolnshire—in fact, I remained as long as I could find any work to do, constantly receiving letters from my artist friends in London, giving glowing accounts of the Exhibition of 1839 (opened during my absence), and bestowing anathemas on myself for remaining away from the scene of those glories, and the successes of my particular friends, notably of Cowper and O'Neil, both of whom had exhibited pictures which had found purchasers.

Looking back, I feel that I not only did not lose time, but improved it by my Lincolnshire practice. No better preparation could be imagined for a man whose powers enable him to cope successfully with the lower or the higher branches of art, than the careful study of nature and character that portrait-painting insures. I have seen several of my performances since they were painted, and what surprised me, and still surprises me, is the curious difference in the merits of works done in consecutive order. I find some quite exceptionally well done for so young a hand—good in drawing, color, and character—

others bad in every respect; but I have the satisfaction of feeling that in every instance I endeavored to do my best, and undoubtedly I gained greatly by the experience. My work generally became much improved, and I would impress upon the young student the desirability of similar practice when attainable.

CHAPTER VII.

"POSTING" FROM HARROGATE TO LONDON.

I AM perfectly ignorant of the principles of literary composition. "Ignorance is bliss," they say; it may be, but I have never been able to taste the rapture that condition of mind is said to engender—indeed, I am suffering from the misery of it at this moment. To those who have accompanied me thus far in my reminiscences, my confession of incompetence is needless; but I plead it in excuse for the introduction in this place of matter that I fancy should have appeared before. With this short prelude in the shape of excuse, I have to say that in the year 1837 my father came to London, and stopped at my uncle Scaife's hotel, as usual. He was a great sufferer from asthma; and influenza being at that time very prevalent, he was attacked by it, and died after a few days' illness. I felt his loss very bitterly, for, as so often happens, under a somewhat gruff manner there beat a warm and tender heart; he was a kind and loving father, and his loss, at the comparatively early age of sixty, was a lasting grief to his widow and children. So soon as my mother could find a tenant for the Dragon Hotel—of which my father had recently become owner as well as landlord—she prepared to leave Harrogate for London, so as to make a home for her sons, whose professions (law and art) rendered a residence in London imperative. I may premise that for many years my mother had been a terrible sufferer from rheumatic gout; entire loss of the use of her limbs being the result. There were no railways between York and London; a night-and-day journey in a stagecoach presented such a picture of misery, and perhaps injury, to the invalid as to necessitate some other mode of conveyance. There was nothing for it but to "post" all the way to London. A large carriage was procured, with an ample roof for luggage, and a "rumble" behind. Well do I remember the packing (piling, rather) of that tremendous luggage! When a mountain of moderate dimensions had been erected, there still remained a large hair-trunk.

"Where on earth is that to go? There is no room for it up there," said I to one of the packers—an old servant, who had known me from a child.

"Oh, there's plenty of room up in the allyment," said Seth, and up into the element went the trunk, nearer to the stars than it had ever been before.

Then came the scarcely less difficult packing of my mother. That accomplished, my sister and, I think, a maid being inside, and I in the rumble behind with a Yorkshire housemaid, we started on our long journey southwards. We were driven by easy stages—fifteen miles, more or less, at a stretch—when, with fresh horses and post-boys, we continued our travel. I very soon found I was mistaken for a footman; my homely appearance and my position in the rumble may partly account for the misconception; and I very likely favored it by my readiness to alight at each stage, in seeing after fresh horses, and in making myself more or less useful in attaching them to the carriage. If I had any doubt of my mistaken identity, it was put to rest by the third post-boy, who, after using bad language to me because I did not buckle some strap or other properly, called out to me, "Here, you just stand by the 'orses 'eads while I go and get just a nip at the bar;" and there I stood. And when my friend rejoined me, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he informed me that "There was no house on the road where you could get a better glass of 'srub' than the Black Bear; and now just give us a leg up, will you?"

I confess I enjoyed my domestic position very much, and took advantage of it often during our journey. My dear mother first frowned when I touched my hat to her, and then laughed and assisted in the fun—giving me fictitious orders, and then scolding and threatening me for forgetting them.

At one place where we changed horses our new attendant was a very old post-boy—a figure quite strange to the present generation. He wore an old white hat, a weather-stained jacket that had once been blue, buckskin breeches "all too wide for his shrunk shanks," and boots that had seen better days. I led one of his horses from the stable, and tried to back it into its proper place in front of the carriage. The animal, wiser than the post-boys, knew that I was an impostor, and refused to be directed by me. He backed against the carriage-door. My mother screamed and scolded, and the old post-boy roared in stentorian tones that I thought ought to have shaken him to pieces:

"Hold there, will you! What are you a-doing of? Bring her here, can't you?"

I meekly obeyed, and resigned my charge to her master, who speedily placed her in her proper position.

"I should say you was a in-door servant. Don't know nothing about osses, eh?" said the old man.

"Yes," I said; "my work is mostly in-doors. I am not accustomed to horses much."

"Then why couldn't you let 'em alone? You'd no call to meddle. You'd a been right served if she'd kicked you."

As we approached nearer to London, the delusion became, if possible, more pronounced.

"Won't the ladies alight and take some refreshment?" said a man, apparently the landlord of the inn at which we were changing horses.

The notion of my mother alighting amused me, and I went to the carriage-window, and, giving my hat the footman-touch that I knew so well, I said:

"The landlord desires to know if your grace will alight and take some refreshment."

"Go along, you naughty boy!" said my mother. "Tell him we haven't eaten half the provisions we brought with us."

To the landlord I said, respectfully,

"Her ladyship is not very well, and would rather not alight."

"Humbug!" said the landlord. "Jemmy"—to the post-boy—"mind how you go round the corner after you pass the bridge as you go into ——" (some town, the name of which escapes me), "or you'll upset 'em, as you did the judge you took to the assizes, you know."

"Oh, ah! I'll mind," said the post-boy.

Now whether those directions to our driver conveyed masked orders for our destruction or not (in consequence of her grace refusing to alight) will ever remain a mystery. The landlord's directions made me very uneasy, and when the distant bridge came into view across the top of the carriage—or rather on one side of it—and the post-horse pace was rapidly increased till it became exceedingly like a gallop, I felt that the last moments of all of us (except the post-boy) might be alarmingly near. Now we are on the bridge; we approach the corner; the carriage sways sideways past it, all but over; we are safe at the Bridge Inn. This was too much for my mother. She called the driver to the carriage, and rated him soundly. "How dared he drive in that furious way!" etc., etc.

"It's the osses, mum; I can't hold 'em. Bless you! they knows like Christians they're a-nearing home, and their grub's a-waiting for 'em. I couldn't stop 'em; but you're all right. Why, t'other day we'd a upset, but nobody wasn't hurt, and perhaps you wouldn't a been neither."

"Go away," said my mother, "and send the next driver to me."

That person received a warning that if he pursued anything like the mad career of his predecessor he would be mulcted of the threepence a mile that the post-boy usually received for himself.

One more wayside experience as a footman, and I take off my phantom livery. As we drove up to an inn, not many miles from London, I could see from my perch in the rumble that it was blessed with a remarkably pretty barmaid. From my youth up I have been, and ever shall be, sensible to the charm of female beauty; and I think one glance at the barmaid was enough to make her acquainted with that fact, sensible as she must have been of her own attractions. Besides, was I not a fellow-servant?

I was young, so was she, though a little older than myself. At that time I despised any girl *younger* than myself; *now* I am of a different opinion. I talked to my mother at the carriage-window for a moment, with a very bright eye on the bar-window. Good gracious, she beckons me!

"I feel so thirsty, mother."

"Well, dear, go into the house and get something; and here, take this bottle and get it filled with the best sherry they have."

I went to the bar.

"Now, young man, what can I do for you?"

What a question! She was prettier near than at a distance.

"What will you take—what is it to be?" said the pretty barmaid; and she kindly added, "Whoever changes horses here, the orders is to give the servant a glass of anything they like best."

"Oh, thank you!" said I. "I think I will take a glass of—of—"

"Try the 'srub?'" said the barmaid.

"What is 'srub?'" said I. (I really did not know.)

"Oh, come, that's a good un! you pretend you don't know what 'srub' is! There, that's it. Down with it; it will do you good after your journey. Come a long way?"

The "srub" nearly choked me—filthy stuff—rum, I think.

"Will you be so good as to fill this bottle with the best sherry you have got?" said I.

"Ain't got any best," said the barmaid; "it's all best in this house. There you are; six shillings, please. Going to London?" inquired the lady.

"Yes."

"Ah, I wish I was going with you!" said the barmaid. (I am afraid I devoutly wished she was.) "I've never been to London; have you?"

"Yes," said I.

Here we were interrupted by our new post-boy, who said:

"Now, young fellow, your missis wants to know if you are going to stand there jabbering all day. It's my opinion you'll have to look out for another situation if you don't mind what you're about."

We resumed our journey, and in due time arrived at my uncle's house in Brook Street—not the hotel, but at a private house in Upper Brook Street, to which he had retired from business in easy competence. We were most kindly received, and there we remained till a house could be found for us. After much searching, we found in No. 11 Osnaburgh Street a house that suited us in all respects save one—there was no decent painting-room. But I made the best of a small back parlor, in which I painted my first composition, and in which I passed some of the happiest hours of my life; and to that small studio (with many apologies for this interruption to my narrative) I now return.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT "SUBJECT-PICTURES."

I DETERMINED to try my hand at what we called "a subject-picture." My admiration of Cowper led me into unconscious imitation of his manner, and after throes unutterable I produced a small composition of two lovers—a reminiscence of a little *affaire de cœur* of my own. The lady was represented listening to vows, that were as sincere as I could make them appear, from a gentleman in a Spanish costume fresh from the masquerade-shop.

The picture was sent to the Liverpool Exhibition, and sold for fifteen pounds. It was long before I could reconcile myself to the idea of being paid for a portrait; but that any idiot could be found who would give fifteen golden sovereigns for a child of my imagination astounded and delighted me, and at the same time urged me to further effort. As I have said earlier in this narrative, I was a great reader of Scott. With his novels I was very familiar, less so with his poetry. I read much of the poetry, however, with a view to a picture, and fixed upon a scene from the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"—selecting the following passage for illustration:

> "Full slyly smiled the observant page,
> And gave the withered hand of Age
> A goblet crowned with rosy wine."

A much-needed refreshment for the old man as he proceeds with his long-winded narrative to the duchess.

It was necessary, of course, to get an old and, if possible, a *bearded* model; but the latter in those days it was almost *im*possible to find, as an account given later in these reminiscences of my search after that then rare individual will show. I knew far too little of perspective, and consequently the relative sizes of the old man and the page puzzled me frightfully; sometimes their figures were tumbling over each other, and sometimes they were slipping out of the picture. Do what I would, I could not make their feet stand flat on the floor. The boy had a stupid giggle on his face, and stood upon his toes. The old man's beard insisted on looking as if he had tied it on, and its annoying owner nearly drove me wild with his remarks; and the girl who sat for the page said, "She never see such a face; it wasn't like *her*, *she* knew." Indeed it was not, nor like any earthly thing. How well I remember throwing down palette and brushes, and rushing out of the house in despair, and wandering about Chalk Farm, where pigeon-shooting was going on, watching the pigeons as they were knocked over, almost envying their fate! After rubbings out and alterations innumerable, the picture was finished. O'Neil and poor Cowper came, smiled, and said nothing. My old master told me flatly I should never do anything as long as I lived, and that all his hard work to make an artist of me had been thrown away. This was inspiriting! However, I sent the "Last Minstrel" to the Suffolk Street Gallery, and it was hung among other specimens of imbecility. The whole exhibition was frightfully criticised in the newspapers, and if I were not selected for especial abuse, it was evident, I thought, that I was not worthy of notice.

In spite of the practice I had had in portrait-painting, I still felt great difficulty in painting flesh; and I therefore made many more studies from life, in the hope of the improvement that was long a-coming.

Soon after I ventured on another and larger composition of figures, the subject being from Scott's "Heart of Midlothian," and the scene the interior of the church, with Madge Wildfire dragging Jeanie Deans up the centre aisle, to the amazement of the congregation. This was considered to be a great advance on the "Last Minstrel," and, indeed, it might be an advance without going very far; but there was really much more promise, and more performance too, than could have been expected from the miserable shortcomings of the previous work. "Madge

Wildfire" also figured on the walls of Suffolk Street, and I received some compliments on the varnishing-day which greatly elated me, and, what was better, nerved me for future work.

My next attempt was on the principle of "fools rushing in where angels fear to tread," a subject from Shakespeare —"Othello and Desdemona"—and the moment chosen was when Othello takes the pretty broad hint that Desdemona gives him, and declares his love—"Upon this hint I spake." My Othello was painted from an East Indian crossing-sweeper, and Desdemona from my sister; the result being a resemblance to the models from whom I drew the characters, and none whatever to the characters that Shakespeare drew. This picture came into my hands many years afterwards, when I cut off Othello's legs as well as the lady's, and repainted the whole thing; having reduced the size of the picture considerably, but I hope added a little to its value. At the present time Cambridge has the honor of possessing this work, where it hangs among a collection presented to the Fitzwilliam Museum. I respectfully wish the museum joy of it. I sent "Othello" to the British Gallery, accompanied by "Rebecca and Ivanhoe." The "Othello" was hung in a good place; the "Rebecca," a much better picture, rejected; being the only picture I have ever had rejected from any exhibition.

No artist can forget the first notice of him by the press. At any rate, I shall always remember the first public criticism on a picture of mine. In the *Art Journal*, then called the *Art Union*, appeared a few lines of commendation, ending with, "The young painter has given proof that he thinks while he labors."

I well remember attending a lecture given by Haydon in the Suffolk Street Galleries, in which he told us one or two interesting things—one on the subject of public criticism. Wilkie's first exhibited picture was the "Village Politicians." Haydon, Jackson, and he were intimate friends and fellow-students. On the day after the private view at the Royal Academy, Haydon having work of his own in the exhibition, "rushed," as he expressed it, for the morning papers, where he found a favorable notice of Wilkie's "Village Politicians." He "rushed" to Wilkie's modest lodging in Sol's Row, Hampstead Road. He and Jackson tore into the room where Wilkie was at breakfast, and roared:

"Wilkie, my boy, your name is in the paper!"

"No! *really?*" replied Wilkie; and then the three danced hand-in-hand round the breakfast table.

Wilkie's "No! *really?*" became so ludicrously frequent in his conversation that Haydon determined to try to break him of the habit, and in course of a conversation one day in which "No! really?" had cropped up with provoking frequency, Haydon said:

"Now, Wilkie, you mustn't mind my telling you of a habit of yours which is causing people to laugh at you. To whatever is said to you, you give but one reply, the two words, 'No! really?'"

"*No! really?*" replied Wilkie.

In this lecture Haydon gave us some advice direct from Vandyke. A very old lady, said he, who had sat for her portrait to Vandyke in her youth, sat to Hudson, Reynolds' master, in her old age. She complained of the darkness of her complexion as rendered by Hudson, and told that artist "That Vandyke's complexions were very different, as much too pale," in her opinion, "as Hudson's were too dark." In passing through Vandyke's gallery at Blackfriars, in which were many pale pictures, she asked "why he had painted with such fresh, pale colors?"

"Because," said Vandyke, "I have to allow for the darkening effect of time."

Of the truth of this story there could be no doubt, for Hudson told it to Reynolds; Reynolds to Northcote—his pupil; Northcote to Haydon; and Haydon to us. Poor Haydon! for whose genius I feel great respect, and for whose sad fate profound pity. I knew very little of him personally, but I may tell here of a kind act of encouragement to myself. I had painted and exhibited at the British Gallery a little picture of "Dolly Varden" (of which more afterwards, as it was the happy cause of a friendship with Dickens, terminated only by his death); and on going home one afternoon I found my mother in a great state of excitement with an address-card in her hand. She showed it to me without a word, and I read the name of B. R. Haydon. He had left a message with our servant to the effect that he would like to see me, after seeing "Dolly Polly What's-her-name," as he called her, in the exhibition. He wanted to talk to me about the picture, "which you must tell him I admired. Now, you won't forget, there's a good girl." On the following Sunday I presented myself at Haydon's, and found him with two immense cartoons before him, intended for the competition for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament. One represented the expulsion from Paradise, the other the entry of the Black Prince into London, with King John of France as a prisoner. Haydon did not remember my name, and it was not till I mentioned the "Dolly" and his call in Osnaburgh Street that he recovered from his surprise at a strange young man calling upon him. He was then most kind, gave me excellent technical advice, and prophesied for me a prosperous career if I could but guard myself against certain pernicious practices, that seemed likely to be as popular then as other dangerous, foolish, and ignorant views of the real end and aim of art are now. I thought the cartoons very fine, and said so. "Glad you like them," said Haydon; and then pointing to a figure of the devil, who was drawn watching the expulsion of Adam and Eve with an awful smile of satisfaction, "That is intended for Satan; do you think it like him?"

When the time comes for me to notice the cartoon competition, I shall have to speak of Haydon again; but now I must return to my own career. In the year 1840 I exhibited my first Academy picture; the subject was "Malvolio, cross-gartered before the Countess Olivia." In the same exhibition was Maclise's picture of the same subject, now in the National Gallery—of which it is, I think, an ornament; where mine is, I know not, but it could scarcely be considered an ornament anywhere.

I had no influence to aid me in getting the picture exhibited, but my friend Williamson, the porter, promised to let me know if I were successful, and when a pencil note arrived in Osnaburgh Street from the hand of Williamson, saying simply, "Sir, you are hung *safte*," there was joy among the Frith family, and we had oysters for supper.

With a beating heart I waited for the opening of the exhibition. I went hurriedly through the rooms, and could see nothing of my picture. Presently I saw Williamson, who read my anxiety in my face. "You're all right, sir; come here and I'll show you;" and he took me into the Architecture Room, and pointed out Malvolio's yellow stockings at the tip-top of the room.

Could that dirty-looking thing, that seemed as if ink had been rubbed all over it, be my bright picture? There was no mistake about that, but how changed! To the uninitiated it would be impossible to conceive the change that appears to come over a picture when surrounded by others in a public exhibition, and subject to the glare of unaccustomed lights and the glitter of gold frames, with the ruinous reflections from all sides. A story is told of an artist who sent to the Royal Academy a half-length portrait of an admiral; it was his first exhibit, and, being a very excellent picture, was placed on the line in one of the best rooms, and flanked by pictures of academicians on each side. In early days the royal academicians had varnishing-days, but denied them to outsiders. One of the academicians, who found himself, or rather his picture, to be the immediate neighbor of the admiral, was, or thought he was, terribly damaged by the bright blue coat and realistic gold epaulets of the naval warrior. All his efforts to "paint up" to the destructive picture were unavailing, so he took a full brush of glazing color and *toned down the admiral.* When the author of that work cast his eyes upon it on the opening day, he exclaimed to a friend, "I have heard of the effect of the exhibition upon pictures, but I will not believe the change in mine is produced in that way. *No, by Jove!*—look here; some of those dashed R.A.'s have been at it! I can see the glaze all over it." A formal complaint was made to the council; the guilty R.A. acknowledged his crime, was reprimanded, and a by-law was made, ordering that no academician or other exhibitor should, under grievous penalties, dare to paint on anybody's picture but his own. I had never heard of the crime or the order arising out of it until after I was an associate. At the request of my friend Egg I was making some trifling alterations in his picture, when one of the council came to me, and, peremptorily ordering me to stop, told me the story of "toning down the admiral."

All this time my profession was not providing me with income enough to "pay for my washing," as my uncle put it. Instead of living to see the days of my success, my father had died before I was heard of as an artist. My aunt, whose sight I must say was somewhat impaired, could see "nothing whatever to admire in your pictures, Master William;" and as to anybody buying one, I had never, up to 1840, received a farthing for any of my pictures. After my Liverpool fifteen-pound triumph, I either gave them away to people who didn't want them, but were too polite to refuse them, or I sold them to people who forgot to pay even the modest sum demanded.

The "Madge Wildfire" became the property of an artist friend, who never paid for it, because, as he said when I remonstrated, "I couldn't sell it, and was obliged to change it for a piano for my sister, and the piano hasn't got a note to its back."

The "Malvolio" was bought by a picture-dealer for twenty pounds, and he became a bankrupt immediately afterwards.

In short, if I hadn't been possessed of a dear old mother who ministered to all my wants, I must have gone auctioneering after all. "And a precious deal better for you, sir," said my uncle, "than this ridiculous business of yours."

Under these circumstances I thought it very fortunate that I had another call for Lincolnshire portraits. Some of those I had painted on my first visits were thought good likenesses; sufficiently so, at any rate, to induce a demand for more. This time I was more conscientious and careful in my work than ever, and the result was a considerable improvement all round.

I found myself employed by a higher class of clients; among them was a fox-hunting squire, a magistrate and a hater of poachers, every one of whom when brought before him he would have hanged if he could. He was a fine-looking old fellow, with a very handsome family of sons and daughters. A domestic trouble had driven his wife, a most lovely creature, away from her home. The story went that she declared with many tears that she was innocent of the sin imputed to her, and on her knees prayed for blindness "if she were false in word or deed."

The proofs of her guilt, however, were overwhelming, and she was sent to Wales, where she lived many years, and became *totally blind!* She was allowed at last to return and inhabit a little cottage in her husband's park, where her family, now grown up, occasionally visited her, but the squire *never*. Although she, being sightless, need not have known of his visit, if he had chosen to pay her one, nothing would induce him to go near her. At last the inevitable hour came to her, as it will come to all of us. I had heard she was dangerously ill, and, during one of the last sittings for the portrait, as I was working away, listening to the squire's stories, his eldest son came into our temporary studio with very red eyes, and said something in an undertone to his father.

"*No!*" said the old squire, "*I will not!*" and the son left the room.

"Pray don't think of me or the picture, squire," said I. "I have very little to do to finish the sitting, and can do it almost as well without you, if you want—"

"Did you see that boy?" broke in the squire (the boy was over thirty); "he has been crying, a great fellow like that. And for what?—troubling himself about his mother, who has done nothing all her life but trouble us. I go to see her! I'll see her— But there, go on with your work;" and before I had finished my work the poor woman had died without her husband's forgiveness, for which, I was told, she implored with bitter tears.

Soon after this my second "provincial tour" of portrait-painting came to an end, and again I returned to the little back parlor in Osnaburgh Street, this time determined to rival my artist friends, who were all more or less successfully engaged in painting subject-pictures, exhibiting them (when or where they could get them admitted), and sometimes, though not always, selling them.

CHAPTER IX.

MY FIRST SUCCESS.

The Art Union had been established some little time, and had been the means of assisting many young painters, who without such aid would have been compelled to abandon their profession. Good and evil are mixed together in all human institutions, and the Art Union of London is an example of the truth of the rule. Subscribers to that lottery are allowed to select their picture prizes, and the consequence is that works of indifferent merit are often chosen, and men are encouraged in the pursuit of art who ought never to have studied it at all. So much for the mischief of the Art Union. For the other side, instances could be shown of pictures of undoubted merit having escaped from being returned unsold to their producers, by enlightened selectors of Art Union prizes. For example, Maclise's picture of the "Sleeping Beauty" was the chief prize in the year 1840. My admiration for Maclise, owing much to youthful and, I fear, somewhat mistaken enthusiasm, scarcely stopped short of worship—his power of drawing, his prodigality of invention, the facility with which he grouped crowds of figures, and the splendor of imagination displayed in all he did, carried me away captive, and influenced my practice to its detriment.

Under happier circumstances I have always believed, and still believe, that Maclise would have been one of the greatest artists that ever lived, if his birth had been put back two or three centuries, and he had been coerced as the great masters were, and subjected to a seven years' apprenticeship to one of the old Venetians. Then the redundancy of his imagination and the facility with which he produced its images would have been subjected to a discipline that would have enforced a continual study of nature, and a constant copying from it, in everything he would have been permitted to attempt. Instead of such mediæval training, after a perfunctory education at the Royal Academy, the bright young fellow was left to his own unaided and "Will-o'-the-wisp" efforts. His great natural powers betrayed him; he painted huge compositions of figures without using models. His sense of color, never very strong, was destroyed by his constant indulgence in the baleful practice of painting without nature before him. His eyes, as he told me himself, saw the minutest details at distances impossible to ordinary vision. He was evidently proud of his eyes, and he indulged them to the utter destruction of "breadth" in his pictures. As to color, he gave it up altogether; and when any reference was made to the old masters or the National Gallery, Maclise expressed his contempt in much the same words as those of another mistaken clever brother R.A., who would "like to burn them all from Moscow to Madrid."

I would not have attempted this autobiography if I had not possessed myself with the hope of being of service to my young brethren, either in the way of warning from my own mistakes, or from those of others; and I take Maclise as a specially typical instance of the perversion of remarkable powers. As a man, Maclise, whom I knew well in after-life, was delightful in every way; very handsome in person, and of a generous and noble disposition; enthusiastic in his appreciation of contemporary work, free from the slightest taint of envy of others, and universally regretted when he died, after having scarcely passed middle life. The last speech Dickens made in public was at the Academy banquet following Maclise's death, when the great writer, in a few pathetic and eloquent words, never to be forgotten—lamenting the untimely death of his friend—declared his belief, that if, instead of art, literature had been Maclise's aim, a great or greater success than that he had achieved in art would have attended him in letters.

I have said that my worship of Maclise resulted in some damage to myself. Of course, I copied his faults. His facility of design being beyond my power of imitation, I fell back on his love of detail, and the absence of truth and nature in the coloring of his flesh; and these failings I reproduced so successfully as to give me afterwards enormous trouble to correct. I remember a young artist friend saying to me: "Maclise is out and away the greatest artist that ever lived. There isn't an old master fit to hold a candle to him; and if I could only get some of his worst qualities into my pictures I should be satisfied."

I confess I shared those foolish sentiments to a great extent; but I speedily found out my mistake—a condition of mind I heartily desire for some young painters who at this time are worshipping false gods, with bodies of brass and feet of clay; at whose shrine the chief high-priest is a mountebank without the excuse of ignorance or want of capacity to explain the prostitution of talents, if not genius, to purposes so absurd as to make it a world's wonder how any followers of such a craze can exist for a moment.

Until a young painter finds out his natural bent—if he have one—he is apt not only to imitate the manner of his favorite artist, but to try to paint similar subjects, illustrate the same book or poem, or in some way or other follow in the revered footsteps. Strong-headed men avoid this pitfall. I fell into it, and when Maclise painted men in armor, I did a man in armor too. Maclise had done a lady in a red jacket taking leave of a knight in armor—one of the finest things ever done in the world, I thought—and I immediately tried to do something like it. My man was also a knight who, having alighted at an inn for refreshment, and finding himself waited upon by a damsel in a red jacket, proceeded to demean himself in a somewhat ungentlemanly, and therefore unknightly, fashion. He had

"Carved his meal
With gloves of steel,"

and probably taken more Malvoisie than was good for him, and forthwith made desperate love to the maid; who with a smiling countenance listened to his raptures, expressed by a hideous grin on his bearded face, as with one arm round the red waist and the other raised on high, holding the brimming cup, he vowed eternal constancy, or something of the kind.

I don't know what became of that great work. If the possessor should by chance read these lines, I hope he will be induced to allow me to see my early friend once more. In it I succeeded so well in reproducing nearly all Maclise's worst qualities that a candid friend said on seeing "The Knight and Maid of the Hostelry"—as I christened the picture—"Hullo! you are coming Maclise over us. I'll tell you what, old fellow, that thing will be sold for a bad Maclise some day, and you will have an action brought against you."

Armor, with its sheen and glitter, has always been in favor with young painters, either as an important factor in still life, or as an inspiration, often the sole inspiration, in pictures of chivalrous character. I remember one, the production of a young friend of Dickens, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter. The picture represented a very ancient and noble-looking knight, who had sunk down at the foot of an old tree, overcome with the fatigue of his journey from the wars, within what appeared to be easy reach of his castle, the battlements of which were visible among the trees. Some children, also apparently of noble birth—his grandchildren, perhaps—were timidly offering him some apples, the produce in all probability of the orchard in which the old man was resting. I knew Dickens took great interest in the young artist, and in this his first work, and meeting him one day, I asked his opinion.

"A capital picture," said Dickens, in his hearty way. "I was delighted to see it. Armor beautifully done. Apples too—only I think the old boy was too far gone for apples. It would require *burnt brandy*, and a good deal of it, to bring *him* to."

The year following the exhibition of my "Malvolio" I sent to the Academy a picture from "Kenilworth;" the subject was an interview between Leicester and his Countess Amy, when, at the end of one of the wicked earl's stolen visits to Cumnor Place, he is anxious to free himself from the lady's importunity, and in reply to her remonstrance, "Did ever lady with bare foot in slipper seek boon of brave knight, yet return with denial?" he says: "Anything, Amy, that thou canst ask I will grant, except that which will ruin us both." All this simply because the poor woman desired that her marriage should be no longer kept secret. I had been to Knole House—that delightful hunting-ground for artists, now unhappily closed to us—and had made studies of King James's bed and other details for my picture, all of which I painted very carefully; and the result was, that as human beings are more difficult to render than chairs and bedsteads, my picture was more admired for the still-life objects than for the living creatures. Once more I figured in the Architecture Room, but lower on the wall, and I entirely escaped the notice of both critics and purchasers. What became of my Kenilworth picture, or whether it was sold or given away—the latter most likely—I cannot remember.

My delusion with regard to Maclise was soon over, so far as imitation of his manner was concerned; but the example set by him in illustrating "Gil Blas" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" caused so many Vicars and Gil Blases to blossom on the walls of the exhibitions from the hands of many admirers, that the critics fell foul of us; and Thackeray, who was the critic in *Fraser* of that day, declined to give the name of either Gil Blas or the Vicar in full, but always wrote of the latter as the "V——r of W——d," and warned us that if our servile conduct was persevered in, he would never look at pictures of either of those distinguished individuals, much less write about them.

I now come to what I may call my first success, and the subject was taken from the much-tormented "Vicar of Wakefield," the scene being that in which Mrs. Primrose makes her daughter and Squire Thornhill stand up together to see which is the taller, a transparent device which, as the good old book says, she thought impenetrable. To my intense delight this picture was hung upon the line, that envied, coveted position which so many are destined to long for, but never to occupy. I confess I was as much astonished as I was delighted, for I had no interest, not knowing a single member of the Academy.

Acting upon what I thought the wildest advice, I fixed the price of a hundred guineas upon the picture, and it was bought on the Private-View day by an Art Union prize-holder, Mr. Zouch Troughton, who is now my very old friend. My cup was full.

"Never," said I to an artist friend, who I thought might have congratulated me on my success, "will I be off the line again!"

"Never be on it again, you mean," was the reply. "And if you will take my advice, you will go as often as you can to the exhibition and enjoy yourself, for you may never have another chance."

As poor Haydon said to us in his lecture on the subject of Public Criticism, "It is no doubt pleasant to read printed praise attached to your name; but if you live long enough you will find your name in the papers in a form that will make you wish it out again."

I was not long in experiencing the truth of this. One criticism on the "Vicar of Wakefield" picture in a leading paper began thus: "Mr. Frith is a rising artist, and he has already risen to the height of affectation," etc., etc. This is all I can remember, but much more of similar severity followed.

I would here advise all artists, young and old, never to read art criticism. Nothing is to be learned from it. Let me ask any painter if, when he wants advice upon any difficulty in the conduct of his work, he would seek it from an art critic? No, I reply for him; he would apply to an artist friend. But though, as I believe, no advantage accrues in any case to an artist from public criticism, much undeserved pain is often inflicted, and even injury caused, by the virulent attacks that sometimes disgrace the press. For very many years—indeed, ever since I became convinced of the profound ignorance of the writers—I have never read a word of art criticism. "That accounts for your not painting better," I hear the critic say. I think not; but I have no doubt saved myself from a good deal of annoyance.

I have said before that I believe little or no envy of each other's success exists among artists; but my friend who prophesied no more "line" space for me was an exception to the rule. If ever there was a disappointed artist he was one, and he candidly showed his disappointment and envy on all available occasions. He was a portrait-painter, when he could induce anybody to sit to him, and he sometimes painted tolerable portraits; but when they failed he fell foul of Shakespeare and other poets. He once told me of what he called a piece of rudeness offered to him by a sitter, whose portrait was better-looking than the original in everybody's eyes but his own. At first the victim refused to pay, but yielded after pressure. He then said to my friend: "Well, loads of my friends have seen my likeness, and they say it is TOLERABLE—and it may be; a man can't judge of his own appearance—but I bargained for a GOOD picture, not a *tolerable* picture. How would you like a *tolerable* egg?"

I remember walking down Portland Place with my friend, who had suffered from a long interregnum of sitters, and, looking up at the stately houses, he said: "There, just look at that place—what tremendous rooms there must be in it! what walls for whole lengths! And just look at that old fellow coming out — there's a picture! and I can't get a single thing to do!"

There is no doubt that premature success sometimes turns the heads of young artists. Everybody has heard of "Single-speech Hamilton." That orator was a member of Parliament, and once—and once only—he made a brilliant speech. So remarkable was it, that his elevation to high honor was considered to be assured. Single-picture painters crop up now and then—I have seen several examples.

For myself, I can truly say my success acted as a spur to further exertion, and so sure did I feel that I had a fair field and no favor, that I instantly set about a large composition, consisting of all, or nearly all, the characters in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," assembled in front of Page's house—Falstaff, sweet Anne Page, Slender, and the fat man's followers. Millais sat for me for Mrs. Page's little son, and I thought I was fortunate in realizing many of the characters. The picture was large, elaborately finished, and it went to the Academy, followed by much condemnation from friends, and a good deal of satisfaction from myself.

None but artists know the dreadful anxiety of those weeks of waiting till the fate of many months of labor is decided. I was anxious enough; but as I knew I had improved, I could not conceive the possibility of *one* effort being thought worthy of one of the *best* places in the exhibition, and *another*, after a year's experience, being only thought deserving of the *worst*. Such, however, was my unhappy fate. In the worst room's worst light hung my unfortunate picture. Very high, opposite the wretched little window of the dreadful Octagon Room, was thought a sufficiently good position for Falstaff and his friends. Again, if I had been quite dependent on my profession for my bread I must have starved, and to this hour I feel I was treated unjustly.

I well remember dear, kind Etty mounting some steps to look at my work, and when he descended he pressed my hand, and in his gentle voice he said, "Very cruel, very cruel."

The subsequent fate of the picture should be related. After the close of the R.A. Exhibition I sent it to Liverpool, where it must have been better seen, for it found a purchaser for a hundred pounds. At my request the owner allowed me to exhibit the picture again in London. At that time the British Institution existed, and it was mostly filled with pictures which had been previously seen at the Academy.

Without a sanguine expectation of success I sent in my work, and it was hung in a centre place on the line. When I entered the gallery on the varnishing-day, one of the three academicians who had condemned Falstaff to the Octagon Room was looking at my work, and evidently speaking of it to a friend of mine.

"What does the old wretch say?" said I, as I drew my friend on one side.

"Why, he says, if your picture had been in the state it now is, it would have had a first-rate place at the Academy. He says you have worked all over it, and improved it wonderfully."

"And did you tell him it had never been touched since he murdered it?"

"Yes, I did, and he said he didn't believe a word of that."

One of the greatest difficulties besetting me has always been the choice of subject. My inclination being strongly towards the illustration of modern life, I had read the works of Dickens in the hope of finding material for the exercise of any talent I might possess; but at that time the ugliness of modern dress frightened me, and it was not till the publication of "Barnaby Rudge," and the delightful Dolly Varden was presented to us, that I felt my opportunity had come, with the cherry-colored mantle and the hat and pink ribbons.

It would be difficult to convey to the present generation the intense delight with which each new work of Dickens was received; and I can easily believe the story that was current at the time of the sick man, who, lying as was thought on his death-bed, and listening apparently with becoming reverence to the warnings of his clergyman, was heard to mutter as the divine left the room, "That's all very well. Thank goodness, a new number of "Pickwick" comes out on Wednesday."

I found a capital model for Dolly, and I painted her in a variety of attitudes. First, where she is admiring a bracelet given her by Miss Haredale; then as she leans laughing against a tree; then, again, in an interview with Miss Haredale, where she is the bearer of a letter from that lady's lover; and, again, when on being accused of a penchant for Joe, she declares, indignantly, "She hoped she could do better than *that*, indeed!"

These pictures easily found purchasers, though for sums small enough. The laughing Dolly, afterwards engraved, became very popular, replicas of it being made for Dickens' friend, John Forster, and others.

It goes without saying that I had read all that Dickens had written, beginning with the "Sketches by Boz;" and I can well remember my disappointment when I found that the real name of the author was *Dickens.* I refused to believe that such a genius could have such a vulgar name; and now what a halo surrounds it!

I had never seen the man, who, in my estimation, was, and is, one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived; my sensations therefore may be imagined when I received the following letter:

"1 DEVONSHIRE TERRACE, YORK GATE, REGENT'S PARK,
"*November* 15, 1842.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I shall be very glad if you will do me the favor to paint me two little companion pictures; one a Dolly Varden (whom you have so exquisitely done already), the other, a Kate Nickleby.

"Faithfully yours always, CHARLES DICKENS.

"P.S.—I take it for granted that the original picture of Dolly with the bracelet is sold."

My mother and I cried over that letter, and the wonder is that anything is left of it, for I showed it to every friend I had, and was admired and envied by all.

And now came the fear that I might fail in again satisfying the author.

Kate Nickleby, too! Impossible, perhaps, to please the author of her being with my presentment of her—but I must try. And many were the sketches I made, till I fixed upon a scene at Madame Mantalini's — where Kate figures as a workwoman—the point chosen being at the moment when her thoughts wander from her work, as she sits sewing a ball-dress spread upon her knees.

Dolly Varden was represented tripping through the woods, and looking back saucily at her lover.

The pictures were finished, and a letter was written to say so. See me then in hourly and very trembling expectation of a visit from a man whom I thought superhuman. A knock at the door. "Come in." Enter a pale young man with long hair, a white hat, a formidable stick in his left hand, and his right extended to me with frank cordiality, and a friendly clasp, that never relaxed till the day of his untimely death.

The pictures were on the easel. He sat down before them, and I stood waiting for the verdict in an agony of mind that was soon relieved by his cheery—

"All I can say is, they are exactly what I meant, and I am very much obliged to you for painting them for me."

I muttered something, and if I didn't look very foolish, my looks belied my sensations.

"Shall you be at home on Sunday afternoon? I should like to bring Mrs. Dickens and my sister-in-law to see how well you have done your work. May I?"

"By all means. I shall be delighted."

Sunday came, and Dickens with it.

I was standing at the house-door, when a carriage driven by "Boz" drove up to it, the bright steel bar in front giving the "turn-out" a very striking appearance to one like myself not at all accustomed to curricles. 'Tis enough to say the ladies approved, and Dickens gave me a check for forty pounds for the two pictures.

I hope I may be excused for telling in this place that "Dolly" and her companion were sold at Christie's, after Dickens' death, for thirteen hundred guineas. I am ignorant of the local habitation of either of the pictures at the present time. That "Dolly," quite the best of the series, was never engraved. "Kate Nickleby" was more fortunate. An engraver applied through me to Dickens, who readily consented to part with the picture for a "reasonable time."

It appeared that a difference of opinion existed between Dickens and the engraver as to the meaning of that phrase, for after waiting for his picture for two or three years, I received from Dickens the following evidence that his patience was becoming exhausted:

"*Advertisement.*

"To K—e N——y (the young lady in black).

"K—— N——, if you will return to your disconsolate friends in Devonshire Terrace, your absence in Ireland will be forgotten and forgiven, and you will be received with open arms. Think of your dear sister, Dolly, and how altered her appearance and character are without you! She is not the same girl. Think, too, of the author of your being, and what he must feel when he sees your place empty every day!

"*October* 10, 1848."

The reading of Dickens' works has no doubt engendered a love for the writer in thousands of hearts. How that affection would have been increased could his readers have had personal knowledge of the man, can only be known to those who, like myself, had the happiness of his intimate acquaintance.

Of Dickens' great rival, Thackeray, I had but slight knowledge, only, indeed, sufficient to prejudice me strongly, and I have no doubt foolishly, against him. Under his pseudonym of Michael Angelo Titmarsh, Thackeray had written a charming criticism of a picture of mine in *Fraser's Magazine*, and as he had already given sufficient proof in literary work that he was a giant among men, I was very curious to see him, and, if possible, to make his acquaintance. Between forty and fifty years ago a club called "The Deanery" existed in Dean Street, Soho, the members being chiefly literary men, artists, lawyers, and such like, with a sprinkling of men of no special mark. Among the latter was a friend of my own, who invited me to dine with him on an evening when Thackeray was pretty sure to be at the club. My friend expressed his regret that the man I so much desired to see was not in the dining-room, but he had little doubt of our finding him afterwards in the smoking-room, to which we adjourned later in the evening. I may startle some of my acquaintance by declaring that I am, and always have been, a highly nervous, retiring, and modest person—indeed, I often regret my timidity—and if I had been more impudent and self-assertive I should have been more successful in the world. Like a wicked old lady, a friend of Mulready's, who assured him, when drawing very near the close of an erratic life, that if she had "only been virtuous it would have been pounds and pounds in her pocket!" I feel that though I might not have been more virtuous I should have been more prosperous, if a kind of panic, created by a knowledge of my own shortcomings, had not so often made me dumb when I ought to have been more self-assertive.

My friend and I entered the Deanery smoking-room and found a very convivial party; all intimately acquainted, seemingly, listening to a song from a gentleman called Mahony, who, under the name of Father Prout, had made himself somewhat celebrated. By his side sat a big man, to whom I was introduced, and I had the honor of a hand-shake by the great Thackeray. I was very young at the time, although I had just been elected an associate of the Academy, and I sat in awe-struck silence listening to the brilliant talk of those men. Some one called on Thackeray for a song, and he instantly struck up one of his own writing, as I was told. I forget the words, but I remember two individuals—Gorging Jack and Guzzling Jimmy—who seemed to be the presiding geniuses of it. No sooner had the applause accorded to it subsided, than Thackeray turned to me and said, "Now then, Frith, you d—d saturnine young Academician, sing us a song!"

I was dumb before this address, and far too confounded to say anything in reply. Encouraged, perhaps, by my proving myself such an easy butt, the attack was renewed a little later in the evening: "I'll tell you what it is, Frith, you had better go home; your aunt is sitting up for you with a big muffin." Again I was paralyzed, and shortly after I went home.

After this I contented myself with admiration for the works of the great author, without feeling any desire for a more intimate acquaintance with the man. Of course, I often met Thackeray afterwards, but I never gave him an opportunity for renewing his playful attacks. I know very well that Thackeray was much beloved by those who knew him intimately, and I have often been abused by some of his friends (notably by dear Leech) for my absurd anger at what was meant for a joke; but I submit that such attacks on an inoffensive stranger were very poor jokes, and even after the long lapse of time I feel humiliated and pained in recalling them.

The very nature of an autobiography entails upon the writer such a constant use of the first person singular as to make his performance egotistical in the extreme, and though I hope, in the course of my narrative, I shall have a good deal to say of other people, I must, perforce, talk much of myself and my own doings.

To resume, then. I felt my banishment to the Octagon Room (a detestable closet, still to be seen at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square) so keenly, that a kind of despair seized me, and I adopted the advice of my friends and started for a trip up the Rhine with my friend Egg, taking Antwerp and Brussels *en route* to Cologne, pausing at the former places, where we expected to find some of the art-treasures of the world. Our anticipations were fully realized, but I shall say little about them in this place, for a second visit was made to the country of the great Dutch and Flemish painters some years later (a full account of which will be found in the succeeding pages of these reminiscences), when I found that several years' study had enabled me better to appreciate the powers of great artists.

At Antwerp, Rubens is seen in all his glory. A terrible sense of inferiority takes possession of all sensible painters on seeing the works of the greatest men. To approach them, much less rival them, seems utterly hopeless. This depressing feeling has to be subdued; and then a reverent study of the methods and principles displayed in immortal works will improve all who study them with intelligence. Mere copying is of little service, as it is generally—to use Sir Joshua's words—but "industrious idleness."

At the time of which I am speaking, the modern exhibition in Paris, now called the Salon, took place in the Louvre; the modern pictures being hung in front of the old masters. The admirable drawing and, in many instances, the great beauty and careful finish of the pictures by some of the best French painters—who in those days exhibited among their less eminent brethren—inspired me with a determination to go home and "do likewise." On my return, I began another composition from the tabooed "Vicar of Wakefield," the subject being "Thornhill relating his London adventures to the Vicar's family," and a smaller picture of "Knox reproving Mary Queen of Scots." The "Vicar" again took his place upon the line, the "Knox" was a little below it, but in an excellent position; so, in spite of my friend's prediction, I was again on the line, and for the last eight-and-forty years I have never been off it. In the same exhibition with *my* "Vicar of Wakefield" and "John Knox" was *another* subject from the "Vicar," and *another* "John Knox;" the former being an exquisite picture called the

"Whistonian Controversy" (by Mulready), and the other, "Knox Reproving the Ladies of Queen Mary's Court" (by Chalon). Thereby hangs a tale.

In the following summer, but while the exhibition was still open, I was sketching in Stoke Pogeis Churchyard. This place, being the supposed scene of Gray's "Elegy," and the burial-place of the poet, is much frequented by tourists; and one day when I was far advanced with an oil-sketch of the ivy-covered church, a gentleman and some ladies, after admiring the church, marched across the graves and began to admire my representation of it. The gentleman, who was what is called a "languid swell," with Dundreary whiskers and a fashionable drawl, thus addressed me:

"How very charming! Look," he said to his lady friends, "how delightfully the ivy is touched in!" And then, again addressing himself to me, he said: "I feel sure an artist who paints so well must be an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. May I ask if I am right?"

"Quite right," said I.

Then he said, in tones of affected apology:

"May I ask if you exhibit this year in the exhibition now open?"

"Yes; I have two pictures in the exhibition."

"Then I must have seen them, of course; would you mind naming the subjects?"

"Well, one is taken from the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' and the other—" but before I could say another word I was stopped by a loud exclamation of delight at his having the honor of speaking to the painter of the "Whistonian Controversy."

"You remember that splendid work, dear Miss Something-or-other—the obstinacy of the Vicar's opponent so wonderfully done," etc., etc.

I allowed him to exhaust himself with admiration, and then quietly told him he had made a mistake, and that the "Whistonian Controversy" was by Mulready, R.A.

"But I understood you to say that your picture is from the 'Vicar of Wakefield?'"

"So it is, but from quite another part of the book. My picture represents Squire Thornhill relating his town adventures to the Vicar's family."

"Ha! oh—yes—dear me—well now, I can't remember seeing that. Did you see what this gentleman describes, Miss So-and-so?"

"No; we must have missed it somehow."

"And the second picture," said the gentleman, "you were so kind as to—er?"

"The second," said I, "was John Knox and—"

"Oh!" exclaimed one of the ladies, "we saw *that*, and thought it so beautiful!"

"Yes," said the gentleman, apparently quite relieved and delighted to find that he had seen one of my works at any rate. "It is, indeed, a charming picture. You remember," turning to his friends, "how lovely we thought the dancing ladies, contrasting so admirably with the imposing figure of Knox. Sir, I must congratulate you on producing so great a work."

"I am really sorry," said I, "but you are wrong again; the 'Knox' you speak of is painted by Chalon, R.A." Again I described my own picture, and again the party had to confess that by some strange mischance they had overlooked my second contribution to the exhibition as completely as they had the first.

The party took their leave of me, determined—at least, so they said—to go again to Trafalgar Square on purpose to see works which they really could not forgive themselves for having so stupidly missed.

CHAPTER X.

ELECTED AN ASSOCIATE.

A GREAT change has taken place since the year 1844, when such men as Sheepshanks, Vernon, Miller, Gibbons, and others were collecting works of modern art, influenced by the love of it, and not by the notion of investment so common in the last few years. Prominent among the former class of purchasers was Mr. Gibbons, a Birmingham banker, whose acquaintance I made through the exhibition of two pictures at the annual exhibition in that town. On finding that both were sold, Mr. Gibbons commissioned me to paint him some subject from Sterne or Goldsmith, and I suggested for illustration the well-known verse in the "Deserted Village," which describes the village parson leaving his church, when

> "Children followed with endearing wile,
> And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile."

The scene is in the churchyard, and many peasants and their wives crowd round the clergyman, making a very elaborate composition. The price of the picture was fixed at two hundred pounds, a larger sum than I had received for any picture at that time. Mr. Gibbons was an elderly man in delicate health, with a great love of art, and very considerable knowledge of it; in fact, a polished, well-educated gentleman. He came to live in London, and watched the progress of the "Village Pastor" with very intelligent and, to me, most agreeable interest. If he disapproved of any detail he would "hint the fault and hesitate dislike," always in the kindest spirit, and I generally found his criticism serviceable.

The work advanced rapidly and I thought successfully, and in due time made its appearance in Trafalgar Square, where it was among the fortunate "liners."

I had not long made the acquaintance of one of the most delightful of English landscape-painters, and meeting him in the exhibition, he advised me to put my name down for the degree of associate, an honor already in his own possession. I well remember what wild folly the idea seemed to me, and said:

"You are surely joking; what chance have I of being made an associate?"

"Not any," said he; "but I would advise you to put down your name, so as to familiarize the Royal Academicians with it."

"No, no!" said I; "it's too absurd."

"Well, then, I will do it for you," said Creswick, and it was well for me he did.

The "Village Pastor" made a favorable impression on the public generally, and many were the compliments I received from the source most valued, namely, my brother artists.

When an election takes place of either associate or academican, great is the excitement among the aspirants; and rare, indeed, is it that the day of election is unknown to any of those whose names are on the list from which the choice is to be made. I can most truly say I was one of the ignorant, for though Creswick had said he would put down my name, I never gave the matter another thought, so impossible did it seem to me that a very young man—who was but just before the public, not having exhibited more than two or three pictures that had attracted any notice—should have the remotest chance of success in the election for which I thought there must be many more worthy candidates.

My profound astonishment, therefore, may be imagined when one of the Academy porters, my old friend Williamson, called to tell me that I was made what he called "a A.R.A." It could not be—it was not to be believed.

"If this is a joke, Williamson," said I, feeling myself turn very pale, "it is not a kind one."

"Joke, sir! Lord bless you, you was elected all right night before last. I thought you must have heerd on it."

I think the porter had my diploma—signed by Turner, pro president, with Howard's name as secretary attached to it—which he handed to me from a portfolio, but I am not certain of that particular; but what I am quite sure of is, that in a few hours it was in my possession, making "assurance doubly sure."

It was a custom at that time for all newly-elected members to call upon the academicians to make the acquaintance of those august individuals, and to respectfully thank them for what was, in many instances, imaginary support. This ceremony has not fallen into complete desuetude; but its observance has occasionally led to embarrassment, and much discomfort, to the newly-fledged associate. It could not be pleasant, for instance, for a *painter* of great ability, whose pictures had been the "observed of all observers" for some years, to be received by an old academician in the following fashion: "Yes, there was an election last night I know, but I couldn't go; my doctor won't let me go out at night. Ah! things are so altered; my old friends are all gone. Well, I suppose I must congratulate you. You are an *architect*, ain't you?"

For myself, I had little to complain of; I had heard of the danger of "thanking people for assistance that might not have been afforded," and I therefore confined myself to a few platitudes about "being unworthy of the honor, but determined to prove my devotion to the interests of art and the Academy," etc. One candid old gentleman, who told me he had known Sir Joshua Reynolds, immediately denied all complicity in my election. "Not, my dear young man, that you may not deserve your good-fortune—I cannot say, for I have never seen any of your work." Many of the Forty were either from home, or pretended to be; but I caught Mr. H. W. Pickersgill, the well-known and accomplished portrait-painter of that period, and who then lived in Soho Square. He received me very kindly, and in the middle of an eloquent exhortation as to my future conduct, Mrs. Pickersgill entered the room. She was a very handsome old lady, with a ravishing smile and beautiful teeth—so wonderfully beautiful as to raise doubts as to their origin. I was instantly introduced to her.

"This young gentleman, my dear, is Mr. Frith."

"Well," said Mrs. Pickersgill.

"Mr. Frith, my dear, was elected an associate of the Royal Academy the other evening."

"*Well*," replied the lady, "he is no better for that."

My election found me at work upon two pictures: one being an illustration of Molière's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," a commission from Mr. Gibbons; the other a scene from Gray's "Elegy," which was also a commission from Mr. Farrer, a well-known picture-dealer and connoisseur of that day. I think neither of these pictures fulfilled the expectations raised by the "Village Pastor," either in my friends or myself; and I felt the imperative necessity of immediately embarking on some subject of such importance as should justify my election, by the manner in which I should execute the work.

In the meantime I attended my first banquet at the Royal Academy. The great dinner that takes place before the opening of the exhibition is generally considered *the* public dinner of the year, and when it is understood that those eligible to take part in that remarkable gathering must either be persons of exalted rank, or great as statesmen, military or naval heroes, ecclesiastical or legal dignitaries, or eminent professors of science or literature or (if last, by no means least) well-known patrons of art, it is evident that an assemblage almost unique must be the result.

It has been my good-fortune to assist at a great many Academy banquets, but the first dwells still vividly in my memory. Sir Martin Shee, the then president, took the chair; with the great Duke of Wellington on his left, some royal prince or duke on his right. The tables were filled with distinguished persons, whose names were, of course, familiar to me, and whose personal appearance I was curious to become acquainted with, for in those days photography did not make known to us, as it does now, the faces and figures of nearly every celebrity. The assembling of the guests among the pictures before the dinner was therefore watched with intense interest.

On this occasion political animosity seemed to sleep. I saw the prime-minister in friendly talk with the leader of the opposition; well-known political antagonists of less prominence chatted together. The Duke of Wellington, catalogue in hand, was examining a picture, when the Marquis of Anglesey, lame from the loss of his leg at Waterloo, tapped him on the shoulder. Black-silk breeches were occasionally worn at that time, and Sir Martin Archer Shee, Sir Robert Peel, and several others adopted the style of dress then fast dying out, but one far more becoming than the trouser fashion that succeeded it.

As the youngest member, I was placed very properly in the worst position at the dinner-table, close to the door, through which a cruel draught played ever and anon upon me. But little did I think of such a drawback when, after the toast of "The Army and Navy," the great duke rose to reply. I can see him now, the gray head bent, in acknowledgment of the thunder of applause that greeted him, the broad blue ribbon of the Garter across the white waistcoat, and then the thin, piping voice in which, in a few well-chosen words, he replied to the toast. Other speakers there were, of course, more to the manner born; but none interested me like the "Prince of Waterloo."

The banquet took place in the large room of the present National Gallery—nearest to St. Martin's Church—at that time in possession of the Royal Academy. The principal table, from which branch tables were projected, was placed round the room, leaving space between it and the pictures for the service of the dinner, and for the guests—if they were so minded—to examine the pictures. I believe it is pretty well known that the great duke had no sympathy with poetry or poets, and not unfrequently expressed his contempt for both. No wonder, then, that quotations from the famous manuscript poem, called the "Fallacies of Hope" (a work presumed to be the offspring of Turner's muse, and quotations from which were appended to every picture he exhibited), puzzled the duke, as they did everybody else. An academician, after trying in vain to comprehend one of them, declared it was all "fallacy and no hope." It was my lot to hear another comment, from no less a person than the duke himself. I was walking round the tables, reading the names of the intended diners, when I suddenly came upon the Duke of Wellington, who was standing in such a position between the table and the pictures as to leave no space for me to pass behind him, and I refrained from passing in front.

The picture he was studying was called "Rain, Steam, and Speed," a rather eccentric representation of a train in full speed on the Great Western Railway. Unperceived, I watched the duke's puzzled expression as he read the quotation from the "Fallacies of Hope." He then looked steadily at the picture, and with a muttered "Ah! *poetry!*" walked on.

Dickens, Thackeray, Macready, and Rogers were guests upon the occasion of my first appearance at the Academy banquet. I saw Rogers descend the stairs leaning on Dickens' arm, a support much needed for a man who was "so old," as Maclise said, "that Death seemed to have forgotten him."

It was on that occasion also, I think, that Thackeray, on returning thanks for literature, spoke of his own early desire to be a painter, and his disappointment when, on taking some sketches to Dickens in the hope of being employed to illustrate one of his books, the great novelist "declined his contributions with thanks."

There were some pictures in the exhibition illustrating "Dombey and Son;" I told Dickens of them. "Yes," he said, "I know there are; just go and see them, and tell me what they are like. I don't like to be caught looking at them myself."

CHAPTER XI.

THE "OLD ENGLISH MERRY-MAKING."

Though my Molière picture was not a sufficient improvement upon my previous work to add anything to my reputation, it took the fancy of an eccentric gentleman who successfully tempted Mr. Gibbons—its first purchaser—to part with it, by offering him just three times the sum he had paid for it. I must add that, out of this tempting profit, Mr. Gibbons made me a present of fifty guineas.

The other and still more inferior picture met with a somewhat similar success, without any participation in the profit by me. In the hope that the future would prove that I had only receded in order to make a longer jump, I immediately embarked on a large composition of an "English Village Festival"—eventually christened "An Old English Merry-making," now pretty well known through a very beautiful engraving of it, executed by William Holl. A large oak-tree occupies the centre of the picture; lovers and dancers amuse themselves in its "checkered shade." An old man is dragged by his children towards the dancers, in spite of his evident protest "that his dancing-days are over." Gypsy fortune-tellers and peasantry playing bowls or drinking complete the scene. I put no trust in fancy for the smallest detail of the picture. The oak-tree is a portrait of a patriarch of Windsor Forest, whom I recognized the other day unchanged in the slightest degree; could the tree have seen me, I am sure he would not have known me again. It may be as justly said of old oaks as Wilkie's monk said of the pictorial treasures of his monastery, "They are the substance, and we are the shadows." The cottages are studies from nature, and every figure in the picture is more or less a portrait of the model who sat for it. The old woman sitting at the tea-table by the cottage-door was a Mrs. King, who followed the respectable calling of a washerwoman. She was "no scholar," and hearing me repeat some lines one day when she was sitting, she said,

"Them's beautiful words."

"I should rather think they are; why, they are Shakespeare's." Then, seeing that she did not seem much wiser by the information, I said, "You know who Shakespeare was, don't you?"

"Yes, sir"—then, after a pause—"he was something in your line, wasn't he?"

With the exception of the old gypsy who is telling the fortune of a young person on the left of the composition, I had not much difficulty in finding appropriate models. I used my wife's sisters and some friends rather remorselessly, but, I think, with good effect.

I found an old gypsy in the street, and stopped her. She had something to sell—I forget what—and I offered to be a purchaser, but she must deliver the goods at my house. She came, accompanied by a small gypsy granddaughter. The articles were chosen and paid for.

"Now, good lady and gentleman, let the old gypsy tell your fortunes."

"After a while," said I, and I then proceeded to disclose my purpose. The old woman thought I must be joking. Who could want a likeness of her? If it had been "a long time back" it would have been different; she wasn't bad-looking then, and so on. "Well," said I, "come into my studio, and I will explain matters to you." In one corner of the painting-room stood a full suit of armor—helmet, plume, and lance. The lay-figure, also, was in full evidence, unfortunately. "Here you are—look!" said I, showing her the picture; "this is a gypsy telling the fortune of this young maiden; and what I want is—" Hearing a rustling behind me, I turned round, and saw the old woman in full retreat towards the door, walking backwards as if in the presence of royalty, her eyes fixed with a terrified stare on the man in armor. "What's the matter?" said I. "Don't be foolish; *that* is not *a man*, it's only a suit of armor; there's nothing to be frightened at."

At that moment she bumped against the door, turned and opened it, and fled up the street, the little girl (her granddaughter) after her, as terrified as herself. Fortunately her address had been secured, and after many visits, munificent offers of reward, and incredible difficulty, she was induced to sit, but only on the understanding that "the *steel man* and the other horrid thing" were banished from the studio.

Having had very little practice in landscape-painting, I found great difficulty in the background of the picture. The large tree I managed pretty well, having made a careful study of it; but the bits of distance and the grass and sky bothered me terribly. Creswick, who had become my intimate friend—and who was good-nature personified—offered to mend the distance for me, and the result of his doing so was very satisfactory.

When the picture was shown (according to a custom common to the present time—witness "Show Sunday") to many of my friends and others whom I scarcely knew, Mr. Creswick came among the rest, and went close to the picture to see how his work had prospered, when a man near him said, *sotto voce*, pointing to Creswick's own touches, "What a pity it is, Mr. Creswick, that these figure-painters don't study landscape more! Look how bad *that* is!"

Though my own ignorance of architecture, of animal life, and of landscape has on several occasions forced me to seek the assistance of my friends, I have always done so with great regret and a sense of humiliation; and I would strongly advise any youngster who may read this to provide himself in early life with the knowledge which I neglected to obtain. And I hope that supposititious personage will, at the same time, bear in mind that he must be as determined as I was to do nothing from fancy, but "seek until he finds" the object, dead or living, required for his work. I have never forgotten a conversation between two students who were drawing behind me in the Antique School of the Academy. Said one to the other, "Who did you get to sit for Nell Gwynne in your picture of Charles II. and that lady?"

"Miss Truman," said his friend. "You know her? Sits in the Life. A doosid good model."

"Yes, I know her," said the questioner. "Thought you'd had her. More like her than Nell Gwynne, ain't it? And the king—who sat for him?"

"Oh," was the reply, in a rather conceited tone, "I did him from nothing."

"And you've made him very like," said the candid friend.

The "Old English Merry-making" was hung in one of the angles of the middle room in Trafalgar Square, and was very successful. Previous to its going to the exhibition it was sold to a picture-dealer for three hundred and fifty pounds; since then it has changed hands many times, and is now an heirloom in a large collection in the north. If I were to repeat some of the flattering things that were said of my work I should lay myself open to the charge of a performance on my own trumpet—a proceeding very foreign to my disposition—and if I mention one instance of generous praise it is more for the purpose of opposing a common error into which those who knew little or nothing of the great Turner were in the habit of falling. I have heard him described as surly, miserly, and ill-natured; as a man who never said an encouraging word to young men, and who was always a severe critic. I know nothing of the truth or falsehood of the miserly charge; but I do know that Turner's treatment of young men and his kindness in expressing his opinion of all contemporary work were in exact opposition to the general notion of his disposition. When the "Merry-making" was being exhibited I was one of a large party at dinner at Vice-chancellor Sir James Wigram's. All present were older and superior to myself, and I was startled out of my usual silence by Lee, R.A., who called to me from the other end of the table, asking if I knew what Turner had said of my picture.

"No, sir," said I, feeling myself turn red and pale alternately.

"He says it is beautifully drawn, well composed, and well colored."

It is perfectly well known that the severest criticism Turner was ever heard to make was upon a landscape of a brother academician whose works sometimes showed signs of weakness. Turner joined a group who were discussing a certain picture's shortcomings, and, after hearing much unpleasant remark, from which he dissented, he was forced to confess that a very bad passage in the picture, to which malcontents drew his attention, "*was a poor bit.*"

If I write anything in these pages that I cannot vouch for I always warn my readers; and I am not certain whether Turner said to the gentleman who is usually called the great art critic, "My dear sir, if you only knew how difficult it is to paint even a decent picture, you would not say the severe things you do of those who *fail.*" But this was attributed to him.

Another story of the great art critic is to the following effect: In the exercise of his high calling, friendship for a painter was not permitted to bias the critic's judgment of his pictures; and though David Roberts, R.A., was the intimate personal friend of the critic, his works found so little favor with the brilliant writer that, in one of the annual notices of the exhibition, they received a very savage castigation. Feeling, perhaps, that Roberts might find it difficult to reconcile an attempt to do him a serious injury with the usual interpretation of the term friendship, the critic wrote a private note to the artist, explaining his action on the hypothesis of a self-imposed duty to the public, and concluded his note by the expression of a hope that severe criticism would not interfere with the sincere feeling of friendship which the writer hoped would always exist, etc. To this Roberts replied, that the first time he met the critic he would give him a *sound thrashing;* and he ventured to "hope that a broken head would not interfere with the sincere feeling of friendship which he hoped would ever exist," etc.

When Turner overpraised my picture I had never spoken to him, and had seen him only on the varnishing-days at the Academy. At that time they extended generally to nearly a week, luncheon being served daily in the council-room. Upon my first attending those luncheons they were but slightly inferior in interest to the banquet to me, for I saw gathered round the table the greatest artists of the country, venerable figures most of them; in my eyes an assembly of gods. To listen to the talk of such men, to smile at their jokes, though never to presume to join in their conversation, was happiness enough for me. I can't say I find associates so modest in these days; no doubt they have less reason for diffidence than I. As each, to me, strange face joined the table, Creswick, or Edwin Landseer—who had introduced himself to me—told me the name of its owner, and in this way I made my first acquaintance with the outward and visible forms of the academicians.

On one occasion the luncheon was half over, when a new-comer arrived in a condition of considerable excitement.

"Why, Reinagle," said Turner, as the late arrival prepared to take a seat by the great landscape-painter, "where have you been? You were not in the rooms this morning."

"*Been*, sir?" said Reinagle (who was what is vulgarly called "half-cracked"); "I have been in the City. I have invented a railway to go up and down Cheapside. Omnibuses will be done away with. I shall make millions, and"—looking round the table—"I will give you all commissions." Then, looking aside at Turner, who sat next to him, "And I will give you a commission if you will tell me which way to hang the picture up when I get it."

"You may hang it just as you please," said Turner, "if you only pay for it."

Turner's extraordinary knowledge made him an admirable critic, though, as I said before, never a severe or unkind one; and he was always ready to share his knowledge with those who could profit by it. After he had said to me more than once, "Now, young gentleman, a glass of brown sherry"—people took wine with one another in those days—I ventured upon enough familiarity to ask him to look at my pictures, and many a time I have benefited by his wonderful knowledge of light and shade; and though I confess the drawing of the figures in his pictures is often funny enough, he was quick to see and point out errors in the action and drawing of mine, and more than once he has taken his brush and corrected a piece of foreshortening that had mastered me.

Turner was, without doubt, the greatest landscape-painter that ever lived; but so mysterious were some of his last productions, so utterly unlike nature, to my eyes, that I should almost be inclined to agree with Reinagle, that they would look as well the wrong way up as the right way. Strange as it may sound, it is absolutely true that I have heard Turner ridicule some of his own later works quite as skilfully as the newspapers did. For example, at a dinner when I was present, a salad was offered to Turner, who called the attention of his neighbor at the table (Jones Lloyd, afterwards Lord Overstone) to it in the following words: "Nice cool green that lettuce, isn't it? and the beetroot pretty red—not quite strong enough; and the mixture, delicate tint of yellow that. Add some mustard, and then you have one of my pictures." It was, and always will be, a puzzle to me how a man whose earlier works are the wonder and admiration of all who see them, could have reconciled himself to the production of beautiful phantasmagoria, representing nothing in the "heavens above, or on the earth beneath." And what is still more wonderful is that people can be found to admire and buy them at such enormous prices.

An erroneous notion prevailed that Turner occasionally had painted the *whole* of some of his pictures during varnishing-days. To those who know anything of the time required to produce a picture the idea is absurd; but I have seen great effects in the way of change and completion produced by Turner in a very short time, and that, sometimes, to the injury of neighboring works, as the following anecdote will prove: In one of the angles of the middle room there hung, in one of the exhibitions, a long, narrow, delicately-colored picture by David Roberts—"A View of Edinburgh;" and next to it, in immediate juxtaposition, was a picture which Turner called "Masaniello and the Fisherman's Ring," with the inevitable quotation from the "Fallacies of Hope." When first placed on the wall, Masaniello's queer figure was relieved by a pale gray sky, the whole effect being almost as gray and quiet as Roberts' picture. Turner was a very short man, with a large head, and a face usually much muffled "to protect it from the draughts" for which the rooms were celebrated. Both he and Roberts stood upon boxes, and worked silently at their respective pictures. I found myself close to them, painting some figures into a landscape by Creswick. I watched my neighbors from time to time, and if I could discover no great change in the aspect of "Edinburgh," there was no doubt whatever that "Masaniello" was rapidly undergoing a treatment which was very damaging to its neighbor without a compensating improvement to itself. The gray sky had become an intense blue, and was every instant becoming so blue that even Italy could scarcely be credited with it. Roberts moved uneasily on his box-stool. Then, with a sidelong look at Turner's picture, he said, in the broadest Scotch,

"You are making that varra blue."

Turner said nothing, but added more and more ultramarine. This was too much.

"I'll just tell ye what it is, Turner, you're just playing the deevil with my picture, with that sky—ye never saw such a sky as that!"

Turner moved his muffler on one side, looked down at Roberts and said,

"You attend to your business and leave me to attend to mine."

And to this hour "Masaniello" remains — now in the cellars of the National Gallery—with the bluest sky ever seen in a picture, and never seen out of one.

I may add another anecdote of Turner, for the truth of which I can vouch. In Rathbone Place there used to be a print-shop, kept by a man whose name I forget; but he was well known as a very superior person to the ordinary printseller of that period, having a thorough knowledge of his business and a great love of art in all its forms. He was, of course, therefore, a great admirer of Turner, whose

"Liber Studiorum" he appreciated; and whenever one of that wonderful set of engravings could be found the Rathbone Place connoisseur bought it if possible. In some way or other a fine plate from the "Liber" series came into his possession, much damaged by stains and rough usage. Feeling that it could scarcely be further injured, he placed it in his shop-window. In passing one day Turner saw the damaged print, bounced into the shop, and fell foul of the printseller.

"It's a confounded shame to treat an engraving like that!" pointing to the window. "What can you be thinking about to go and destroy a good thing—for it *is* a good thing, mind you!"

"*I* destroy it!" said the shopman, in a rage. "What do you mean by saying I destroyed it? and who the devil are you, I should like to know? I didn't ask you to buy it, did I? You don't look as if you could understand a good print when you see one. *I* destroy it! Bless my soul, I bought it just as it is, and I would rather keep it till Doomsday than sell it to you; and why you should put yourself out about it, I can't think."

"Why, I did it," said Turner.

"Did what! did you spoil it? If you did, you deserve—"

"No, no, man! my name's Turner, and I did the drawing, and engraved the plate from it."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the printseller. "Is it possible that you are the great Turner! Well, sir, I have long desired to see you; and now that I have seen you, I hope I shall never see you again, for a more disagreeable person I have seldom met."

Until Mr. Ruskin opened the eyes of the public to Turner's merits his pictures rarely sold, and when they did sell they only fetched small prices. Mr. Munro, of Novar, at whose house in Hamilton Place I once met Turner at dinner, possessed several of his pictures, for each of which he had paid, as he told me himself, two hundred pounds; among them was that magnificent picture of the "Grand Canal at Venice" which was purchased by Lord Dudley, after Mr. Munro's death, for something under eight thousand guineas. Others of his works, from the Bicknell and Munro collections, fetched correspondingly large sums.

Mr. Munro, a Scottish laird, was also an artist of some ability, and the possessor of many fine old masters, as well as of modern works. Turner lived in Queen Anne Street, and at the back of his house he had built a large gallery, and had completely filled it with unsold works, numbers of which now form part of the collection in the National Gallery.

I can never forget the woe-begone appearance of the long gallery to which Turner had consigned his pictures. The walls were almost paperless, the roof far from weather-proof, and the whole place desolate in the extreme.

"Though the very look of the place was enough to give a man a cold," said Munro to me when I met him one Sunday afternoon, "I found Turner an hour ago crouching over a morsel of fire in the gallery, with a dreadful cold upon him, muffled up and miserable."

"Yes, here I am," said Turner, "with all these unsalable things about me. I wish to Heaven I could get rid of them; I would sell them cheap to anybody who would take them where I couldn't see them any more."

"Well," said Munro, "what will you take for the lot?"

"Oh, I don't know; you may make me an offer if you like."

Munro told me he took but a few minutes to look at the pictures and make a mental calculation, and then he offered to write a check for twenty-five thousand pounds for the whole of them. Turner's bright-blue eyes glittered for a moment. He turned to the fire and seemed absorbed in thought, and then, addressing Munro, he said,

"Go and take a walk, and come back in an hour, and I will give you an answer. Thank you for the offer."

"It is now about time to go back to Queen Anne Street," said Munro, "so I wish you good-day."

A short time after this conversation I again met Mr. Munro.

"Well," said I, "am I to congratulate you on the purchase of the Turners?"

"No," replied Munro. "When I got back to the old man, his first words were,

"'Hullo! what, you here again? I am very ill; my cold is very bad.'"

"Well," said Munro, "have you decided; will you accept my offer?"

"No, I won't—I can't. I believe I'm going to die, and I intend to be buried in those two" (pointing to the "Carthage" and "Sun rising through Mist," which now hang near the Claudes in the National Gallery, being placed in their proximity by Turner's especial request). "So I can't; besides, I can't be bothered—good-evening."

It is recorded that Turner expressed to Chantrey his determination to be buried in these two famous pictures. Chantrey's comment on this morbid intention was: "Indeed. Well, if that bright idea is carried out we will dig you up again, and unroll you as they do the mummies."

For two or three years after I was elected associate a dinner took place when the exhibition closed, at which any exhibitor for the year could be present, provided he was introduced by a member and was willing to pay a guinea for the privilege. The modern *soirée* is now given in lieu of those dinners, but those dinners were very pleasant meetings. The R.A.'s seemed to lay aside a little of their dignity, and most of them were very courteous—if sometimes slightly patronizing—to the outsiders. Those who could sing or tell a good story—and some of them could do both—willingly added to the general hilarity. Edwin Landseer sang delightfully, and was one of the best story-tellers I ever knew. We had speeches, too, and on one never-to-be-forgotten occasion a speech from Turner. I fear a written description will give but a faint notion of that memorable oration, the only one he was ever known to deliver. The stammering, the long pauses, the bewildering mystery of it, required to be witnessed for any adequate idea to be formed. In writing I fear it is impossible to convey it. It was not unlike the most incomprehensible of his later pictures, mixed up with the "Fallacies of Hope." He looked earnestly at the guests before he began, and then spoke as follows: "Gentlemen, I see some—" (pause, and another look round) "new faces at this—table— Well—do you—do any of you—I mean —Roman history—" (a pause). "There is no doubt, at least I hope not, that you are acquainted—no, unacquainted—that is to say—of course, why not?—you must know something of the—old—ancient—Romans." (Loud applause.) "Well, sirs, those old people—the Romans I allude to—were a warlike set of people—yes, *they were*—because they came over here, you know, and had to do a good deal of fighting before they arrived, and after too. Ah! they did; and they always fought in a phalanx—know what that is?" ("Hear, hear," said some one.) "Do YOU know, sir? Well, if you don't, I will tell you. They stood shoulder to shoulder, and won everything." (Great cheering.) "Now, then, I have done with the Romans, and I come to the old man and the bundle of sticks —Æsop, ain't it?—fables, you know—all right—yes, to be sure. Well, when the old man was dying he called his sons—I forget how many there were of 'em—a good lot, seven or eight perhaps—and he sent one of them out for a bundle of sticks. 'Now,' says the old man, 'tie up those sticks tight,' and it was done so. Then he says, says he, 'Look here, young fellows, you stick to one another like those sticks; work all together,' he says, 'then you are formidable. But if you separate, and one go one way, and one another, you may just get broke one after another. Now mind what I say,' he says—" (a very long pause, filled by intermittent cheering). "Now," resumed the speaker, "you are wondering what I am driving at" (indeed we were). "I will tell you. Some of you young fellows will one day take our places, and become members of this Academy. Well, you are a lot of sticks" (loud laughter). "What on earth are you all laughing at! Don't like to be called sticks? wait a bit. Well, then, what do you say to being called Ancient Romans? What I want you to understand is just this—never mind what anybody calls you. When you become members of this institution you must fight in a phalanx — no splits — no quarrelling—one mind—one object—the good of the arts and the Royal Academy."

It will be seen that Turner had an idea which he desired to impress upon us, and it was not till he got to the end of his speech that we could imagine, as he said himself, what he was "driving at." Turner died in 1851. He had been ailing for some time, and had gone to Ramsgate in the hope of improving his health; a slight change for the better took place, owing, as Turner thought, to the skill of a local doctor, and the sick man went back to his lodgings in Chelsea, where his illness returned upon him with great virulence. The Ramsgate practitioner was sent for, and without a moment's delay he went to the bedside of the dying painter, whose condition he saw instantly was hopeless.

"Well, doctor," said Turner, "you can cure me if anybody can. What's the verdict? Tell me the truth."

"I am afraid I must beg you to lose no time in any worldly arrangements you desire to make."

"Wait a bit," said Turner; "you have had nothing to eat and drink yet, have you?"

"No; but that's of no consequence."

"Yes, it is. Go down-stairs and you will find some refreshment; and there is some fine brown sherry—don't spare it—and then come up and see me again."

The doctor refreshed himself and then returned to his patient.

"Now then," said Turner, "what is it? Do you still think so badly of my case? Wasn't that good sherry?"

"I grieve to say I cannot alter my opinion."

Turner put his hand out of bed, pressed that of the doctor, turned his face to the wall, and never spoke again. Later in the day he died, his death making a vacancy in the Academy ranks which I was elected to fill—how unworthily, in comparison with my predecessor, no one knows better than I.

The art patron is often a strange creature; he places, very justly, but little reliance on his own judgment. "He knows what he likes," but whether the object of his liking is worthy of that distinction or not is a matter about which he is alarmingly uncertain. It too often happens that until a picture has received the "hall-mark" of the picture-dealer the collector is not satisfied; but after that he is often ready to pay for his ignorant incredulity in the form of a great advance on the price for which he might have acquired the work. To illustrate this from my own experience: a distinguished artist friend of mine painted a large picture, for which he asked fifteen hundred pounds. When the work was nearly finished, one of the Manchester merchant princes called to see it, admired, and inquired the price.

"Too much," said the collector; "give you twelve."

"No you won't," said the artist.

"Don't put yourself out."

"I am not put out; but I should just like to ask you, if, when a shopkeeper asks you a price for an article, you make a point of offering him a good deal less than he asks?"

"Yes, very often," was the reply. "Won't you accept my offer?"

"Certainly not."

A few days later the collector called again, and repeated his offer, which was again declined. On one of the "show" days the picture was instantly purchased by a great firm of picture-dealers for fifteen hundred pounds, and sold before it was seen by the public for three thousand pounds to the man who had refused to pay the artist his own more modest price.

Then there is the collector who is always ready to buy something out of his reach.

"My dear sir, how I regret my folly in not possessing myself of your beautiful picture of last year! Could you not make me a copy of it?"

"I fear not, for the owner of the picture objects to copies."

This conversation would take place in the presence of the picture of the year, which might be at that moment unsold, to be repeated in almost similar words the year after.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that artists prefer the dealer, who knows his own mind, to the patron who does not? Turner, on the other hand, detested dealers; he would have none of them. And a story is told of one well-known picture merchant, who was determined—though he was aware of Turner's dislike to the fraternity—to see the famous gallery in Queen Anne Street. Forgetting—or perhaps not knowing—that his card must be given to the servant before admission could be obtained, or believing, possibly, that the maid merely took it as a matter of form, he was proceeding leisurely up-stairs into the gallery, when he found himself pulled backwards by his coat-tails, and on looking round saw the irate face of the great artist; who, without a word, pointed to the front-door, through which the dealer made an ignominious retreat.

CHAPTER XII.

DINNER-PARTY AT LORD NORTHWICK'S.

Among the patrons and lovers of art, the late Lord Northwick was a conspicuous figure; his gallery at Cheltenham was filled with very questionable old masters, and some few good modern ones. When I saw his collection, in 1846, I cannot recall a single fine ancient picture; and the two modern ones I remember best were Maclise's "Strongbow" (now in the Dublin National Gallery) and my old friend Ward's picture of the "Fall of Clarendon" —a work I had the great satisfaction of recommending successfully to Lord Northwick. This nobleman was one of those who never give commissions without knowing for what sum the order may make them responsible; and as it is almost impossible for a painter to say at what value he can safely estimate his work until it is completed, a commission from Lord Northwick was not greatly cared for in times when purchasers were plentiful; and I attribute a dislike to myself, which I very soon discovered in the old gentleman, to my refusal to name a sum, from a small sketch that I showed him, for a large picture which was to be painted from it. His dislike, however, did not prevent his inviting me to stay a few days at Thirlstane House, Cheltenham, accompanied by my friends Frost (an admirable painter of poetic subjects) and E. M. Ward, both afterwards Royal Academicians. Ward was a well-read man, an admirable talker, and, unfortunately, a wonderful mimic; for in the old lord was found food for mimicry almost impossible to resist, and it is to be feared that some of our attempts—for I plead guilty to attempts, inferior though they were when compared with such a master in the art as Ward—must have been overheard by the servants, who were all greatly attached to their master; if so, the coolness shown in the end to all of us was not to be wondered at, and I must say it was well deserved.

When a young man, Lord Northwick had been placed at the court of Ferdinand of Naples, in the position of *attaché* in the suite of the English ambassador during the great French war; when he became also the intimate friend of the King and Queen of Naples, and of Sir William and Lady Hamilton.

I well remember, after a dinner-party at Thirlstane House, Ward's loudly-expressed regret that a shorthand writer had not been there, so that the many anecdotes we were told might have been preserved. Alas, for the frailness of memory! How much do I deplore now that I can remember so little of the scenes described to us, in which Lord Nelson, for one, figured so often! Lord Northwick did not believe that the friendship for Lady Hamilton which Nelson professed extended beyond the bounds of ordinary friendship, and nothing made him so angry as any suggestion to the contrary.

"Poor dear Lady Hamilton!" he would say, in his shrill voice. "A truer wife, a warmer friend, or a better woman never breathed. Why, if she had not prevailed upon the King of Naples to victual the English fleet—entirely by her influence—the Battle of the Nile could not have been fought; and it is to the eternal disgrace of this country that the poor dear creature was allowed to die in destitution."

As a sample of what has been lost, I will repeat, as well as I can recall it, Lord Northwick's account of the execution of Caracciolo.

"Though an admiral in the service of King Ferdinand," said the old lord, "he deserted his colors and assisted the French, and he was justly condemned to death. Of course, Nelson could have saved him" (this in reply to a guest at the table), "but why should he? I see good reason why he shouldn't. On the day fixed for the execution, Caracciolo asked to be shot. He was refused, and hanged at the yard-arm of a ship that he had commanded. I was dining on board the *Agamemnon* with Nelson; the other guests were Ferdinand, the queen, and the Hamiltons. I knew the execution was imminent, but not the precise time fixed for it. We were at dessert when a gun was fired. At that instant Lady Hamilton filled her glass, and, standing up, said in solemn tones, 'So perish all the enemies of Naples!' Nelson motioned me to the cabin-window. I looked out and saw the body of the traitor Caracciolo swinging from the yard-arm some hundreds of yards away. 'I am d—d glad that fellow has got his deserts!' said Nelson." Lord Northwick saw by the shocked countenance of some of his guests that Nelson's remark had surprised and disgusted them. "Oh, you are shocked at Nelson's swearing. It was nothing. He always swore at everything and anything—never opened his mouth without an oath coming out of it. If it was a fine day, it was 'a —— fine day.' Was he quite well? 'Yes, he was ——' (strong adjective) 'well,' and so on. And if his oaths, when he spoke of the French, could have taken effect, the whole nation would have gone to the devil." The old lord continued: "The king and queen remained that night on board the *Agamemnon*, and next morning, when Ferdinand was shaving in his cabin, we were startled by hearing him call out in a loud and agitated voice, '*Vieni qui, vieni qui!*' The king was standing by the cabin-window, ghastly pale, and unable to speak. He pointed to something in the sea. I looked out, and under the window lay the body of Caracciolo, his face upturned, the eyes wide open, looking at me. I shall never forget that sight.

"Poor dear Lady Hamilton! the last time I saw her was at Frascati's gambling-rooms in Paris. She was playing furiously. Nelson sat next to her. He was fast asleep, with his head on her shoulder."

"Did you ever see Bonaparte, my lord?" said Ward.

"Only once. I was at a reception at the Tuileries when he was first consul. He spoke to me, but I don't remember what he said—a commonplace remark, no doubt."

It seemed strange to us that "poor dear Lady Hamilton" should have been so completely forgotten by the devoted friends she possessed, according to Lord Northwick, none of whom, so far as we could learn, took any notice of her after Nelson's death. Certainly Lord Northwick never did, as the last time he saw her Nelson was alive, though asleep.

Lord Northwick showed us every engraving that had been executed from great numbers of pictures painted from Lady Hamilton; many lovely heads by Romney among them; and many a sigh heaved the old gentleman as he produced them.

There is no truth, I think, in the story often repeated to me, that Lady Hamilton ever sat in the Life School of the Royal Academy. Wilkie met her in society once or twice, when she posed with drapery in imitation of antique statuary. He expressed his disappointment with her appearance, which he described as fat and vulgar, with manners to match.

At the time of our visit to Cheltenham, the corn-law question was raging with great fury, and Lord Northwick made such long and tiresome speeches to us on the subject that we often wished him in the House of Lords, where his eloquence, strange to say, was never heard. He almost wept over the imminent ruin of the farmers, and the possible reduction of all rents; and his words, "Protection to native industry," repeated again and again in a singing tone, enabled Ward to reproduce the very voice of the speaker, as he proved on many a winter's evening when, in reply to "Come, Ward, let us have a protection speech from Lord Northwick," he would improvise, how admirably! giving us the sentiments as well as the manner of the noble protectionist. After we had been some days at Cheltenham, we were joined by a young artist named Huskisson, who had painted some original pictures of considerable merit, and also some copies from old masters and others, of extraordinary exactness. Huskisson was a very common young man, entirely uneducated. I doubt if he could read and write; the very tone of his voice was dreadful. He never could have heard of English grammar; and though it might be supposed that he would be ill at ease at a dinner-party at Thirlstane House—where nearly every guest, male or female, had handles to their names—he was always perfectly self-possessed, and, judging from occasional bursts of laughter which followed some of his remarks, he greatly entertained his high-born neighbors at the table.

In the midst of a silence that will sometimes prevail at a dinner-party, Lord Northwick, who sat at some distance from this rough specimen of our profession, called to him, and said:

"Mr. Huskisson, was it not a picture-dealer who bought your last 'Fairy' picture?"

"No, my lord! no, my lord!" replied Huskisson. "It were a gent."

I looked at the faces of some of the guests, but not even a smile was visible; instead there appeared to me expressions of a kind of tender interest in the strange young man. Within a year of our visit, Huskisson died, much to my regret, for I feel sure, in his case, death cut short a brilliant career. A picture by him, full of poetic fancy, was engraved for the *Art Journal.* Scarcely any one who may read these lines will remember the young man. I fear his performances were too few to "keep his memory green."

We left Cheltenham in a carriage-and-four for another house belonging to Lord Northwick, called, I think, Northwick. On the way we called on Lord Ellenborough, who had just returned from governing India: he was from home. As we drove through the grounds, we passed great quantities of laurels, and Ward inquired if those were the laurels Lord Ellenborough had gained in India. If looks could kill, Ward would have died in that carriage, for the old lord not only bestowed a murderous one upon the punster, but he added:

"Mr. Ward, you have painted pictures of Dr. Johnson, and I presume you are acquainted with the sentiments of that great man in respect of puns."

Said Ward:

"Oh, yes! I know, my lord; but that was because he couldn't make a pun himself."

"I differ from you, sir; Dr. Johnson could say anything or do anything. The last thing he would have uttered would have been a poor witticism at the expense of a friend of his host."

"Well, but, my lord, I beg pardon; I don't think what I said could be called a pun."

"Sufficiently like one, sir, to be very objectionable."

At Northwick there was a very old butler, older in appearance than his master; he had been in the family all his life—indeed I was told that he had accompanied Lord Northwick in his first pony-rides, events which must have happened at least seventy or eighty years before our visit. The meeting of master and servant was interesting, even touching.

"Don't let that old chap catch you taking off my lord," said I to Ward. "I don't think he would approve."

Though the old butler was very feeble, he insisted on placing the dishes on the table at dinner. All went well so long as the burden was light, but a haunch of venison proved beyond the old man's strength; the dish—a heavy silver one—slipped from his fingers, and the venison fell upon the floor.

"He is too old," Lord Northwick whispered to me. "I can't bear to tell him so, dear old man. He is forever dropping something or other. It is a pity, though; I should have liked you Londoners to have tasted that venison."

Although the venison was denied to us, we had a dish cooked from the furry covering of the deer's horns, made into a rich mess, the like of which I had never seen before, nor have I since, and devoutly do I hope I never shall see it again; taste it, I never would. One more feeble pun, and I take leave of Lord Northwick. Frost ate some of the strange compound just described, and when his trouble was over, he whispered to me, "This is not cheap and nasty, but *deer* and nasty."

CHAPTER XIII.

ON SUBJECTS.

My own reading lay chiefly in books suggestive of subjects for pictures—Sterne, Goldsmith, Molière, Cervantes, and the *Spectator* taking the lead of all others. Shakespeare inspired me with terror as well as admiration.

It was vain for me to hope to rival Leslie, and therefore dangerous to come into competition with the painter of the "Dinner at Page's House," the "Autolycus," and "Perdita," now in the Sheepshanks Gallery at South Kensington. I have never meddled with Shakespeare without regretting my temerity, for though I have painted several pictures from different plays, I cannot recall one that will add to my reputation. From the *Spectator*, however, I did better, "Sir Roger de Coverley and the Saracen's Head," an admirable subject, proving one of the best of my pictures drawn from books. The incident may be briefly described. An old servant of Sir Roger's becomes the landlord of an inn, and to do honor to his master he has the knight's head painted and put up for a sign.

Sir Roger, hearing of this compliment, sends for the man, and tells him the honor is more than he deserves, or, indeed, than any one deserves, under the rank of a duke, and the sign must be altered; and he, Sir Roger, will be at the "charge of it." Accordingly an artist is procured, who, by the addition of a terrible frown and general wildness of aspect, transforms the knight's likeness into a Saracen's head.

When the alteration is completed, Sir Roger, accompanied by his friend the "Spectator" (Addison), pays a visit to the inn, and the sign is produced for the inspection of the visitors. Then, says the "Spectator," "I could not forbear discovering greater Expressions of Mirth than ordinary upon the Appearance of this monstrous Face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I could still discover a distant Resemblance of my old Friend.

"Sir Roger, upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if I thought it possible for People to know him in that Disguise. I at first kept my usual Silence; but upon the Knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a *Saracen*, I composed my Countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, '*That much might be said on both sides.*'"

I found many would-be purchasers for this picture — it eventually became the property of a Mr. Andrews, of York, who had made a fortune in the railway mania so prevalent in 1847.

With the best intention possible, Mr. Andrews, who was a great friend of Hudson, the Railway King, induced me to take shares in a certain line. The property of the Company was destroyed for a time by the panic that affected all railway interests; and I had the misfortune of seeing the shares of twenty-five pounds each, upon every one of which eight pounds ten had been paid, quoted in the *Times* at half a crown a piece. Mr. Andrews formed a small collection of pictures, mainly under my advice; he was ruined, and his pictures were sold at Christie's, when a good profit was made upon them, but far from sufficient to satisfy his creditors; and this truly honorable and most amiable man died broken-hearted.

The *Spectator* inspired me with a subject for a large picture of a much more important character than the "Saracen's Head." Readers of Addison will remember the paper in which Sir Roger has to deal with a charge of witchcraft against a certain Moll White, who is accused of causing dire mischief to all and sundry of Sir Roger's tenants, and of "making maids spit pins." And she was brought before the knight to answer for her crimes.

My intention was—as my first sketch proved—to represent Sir Roger himself, Moll White, and a sick virgin, on the precise lines of the *Spectator's* paper; but further reflection led me to amplify the theme, and I finally determined to take the incident in the *Spectator* as a peg upon which I might hang a story of deeper interest. So, in an old English mansion with oriel windows and tapestried walls, I placed a lovelorn damsel, bewitched, indeed, by a handsome young forester in Lincoln green, instead of by a frightened old woman, who is vehemently accused by the mother of the girl of having caused the change in her daughter's health and spirits, so alarming to her friends, notably to her old grandfather, to whom she clings for protection when she finds herself in the presence of the grave magistrate—a type of the Elizabethan nobleman—who listens to the outpouring of the mother in dignified silence.

A clerk writes down the evidence; the magistrate's daughter leans on her father's chair, interested in the scene; while her little child steals a fearful glance at the dreadful witch. The real cause of the mischief stands at a little distance, twisting his hat, uncertain whether to reveal himself, and still more uncertain that his doing so would save the old woman from the pond or the stake. A black cat, the witch's familiar, is held above her head; and additional evidence is furnished by a woman at the room door, who brings a sick child whose illness can only be owing to the devilries of the old woman.

This picture and the "Saracen's Head" were my contributions to the Exhibition of 1848. "The Old Woman Accused of Witchcraft" was bought by Mr. Miller, of Preston, for five hundred guineas. Horrocks and Miller's "Long Cloth" is known, I believe, throughout the world. An intimacy, such as so frequently exists between artist and patron, arose between Mr. Miller and me. I spent many happy hours with him at Preston. He was one of the truest gentlemen, and the warmest lover of art for art's sake, that I have ever known. He died long ago, while comparatively a young man, leaving his collection intact in the possession of his widow.

Though I was so fortunate as to be the first of the band of rapidly-rising artist friends to receive the honors of the Academy, E. M. Ward, Egg, Stone, Phillip, and others were running "neck and neck" with me.

Ward's admirable picture of the "South Sea Bubble," now in the National Gallery, secured the painter's election as an associate the year following my own.

Egg painted an excellent picture of "Queen Elizabeth Surrounded by Ladies and Courtiers." Whether apocryphal or not, the subject was one well suited to pictorial art. It is said that the queen had banished looking-glasses for many years; but one day, towards the close of her life, her curiosity got the better of her fears, and she sent one of her ladies for a mirror. Judging from the expression of the withered old face, as it was turned away from the sad sight reflected in the glass, all illusion had vanished, and a terror-stricken conviction that every trace of youth had flown was at last as palpable to the old queen as it had long been to everybody else. This picture greatly added to Egg's reputation. It was purchased by Mr. Miller, and hangs at this moment as a companion to my "Witch" in the collection at Preston.

Egg continued to produce pictures of great excellence, the best, perhaps, being "Peter the Great's First Sight of Catherine" (afterwards empress), a subject which I found and presented to Egg—an act of generosity, I confess, much repented of afterwards, for it was one I should dearly like to have ventured upon myself; indeed, I had made many pen-and-ink sketches of the composition, and what "amazing devil of generosity" — as Dickens said, when I told him of my gift of the subject to Egg—prompted such a disinterested act of good-nature I cannot tell. Egg and I were fellow-students at Sass's Academy, and fast friends through life—through *his* life, I should say, for he died in his prime, but not until he had attained the full honors of the Royal Academy. I shall have something to say later on of charming meetings at Ivy Cottage (Egg's house), in Black Lion Lane (now Queen's Road), Bayswater, where at delightful dinners I met Dickens over and over again, immortal John Leech, Mark Lemon, John Forster (afterwards biographer of Dickens), O'Neil, Webster, Phillip, Mulready, Stone, Mr. Justice Hawkins—then so gentle and quiet that I can scarcely credit the fiery judge with being the same man — and many others, most, indeed, nearly all, of whom have since "joined the majority."

John Phillip — afterwards called Phillip of Spain, from the many wonderful subjects he drew from that country —came to London a very raw Scotch lad, and became a student of the Academy, where I first made his acquaintance, and where he very soon gave proof of great natural genius. He was a *protégé* of Lord Panmure, and pupil of Mr. T. M. Joy, a portrait-painter and intense admirer of Sir Thomas Lawrence. Philip caught the fever, painted with great facility before he could draw, and produced portraits so like the work of Lawrence that they might easily have been mistaken for indifferent pictures by that fashionable genius. I have an unfinished one of myself that would prove the truth of this; and in the likeness done of Egg, Philip managed to include all Lawrence's faults and many of his merits. It would be impossible to conceive greater contrasts than would be afforded by a comparison of Philip's earliest works with his latest. He was, at one time, tainted with Pre-Raphaelitism. His first pictures displayed a grasp of character, but *color*—one of the charms of his later works—was conspicuous by its absence. It was only after the second visit to Spain that Phillip's real power showed itself. Then came, year after year, up to the day of his death, pictures of extraordinary beauty; which, in spite of the caprice of fashion, will be eventually considered glories of the British school. Though the claims of Phillip for academic honors were long delayed, he took the lead, in my opinion, of all the young men, except Millais (not excepting myself, of course), who were added to the academic ranks in my time.

Frank Stone became an associate somewhat late in life, and died before the higher honor (recently so worthily attained by his son Marcus) reached him. It was impossible to know Stone intimately without loving him; for myself, I can say that I never knew any man for whom I had so warm an affection. No fair-weather friend was he, but true as steel when friendly countenance might be sorely needed. Still, I confess, there were drawbacks to the enjoyment of Stone's society. It was enough for any one to advance an opinion for Stone to differ from it. The first time I dined with him at Dickens', having then had little or no experience of his peculiarity in that respect, I foolishly got into an argument with him—something about Waterloo — and finding there was no hope of agreement, and that we were boring everybody present, I allowed him to settle the matter in his own fashion; but he was not satisfied.

"Well," said he, "are you convinced?"

"What about?" said I.

"Why, that you have been making a series of statements for which you have no foundation in fact."

"Yes, if you like," I replied.

After dinner Dickens took me on one side, and inquired if I had known Stone long.

"No, a very short time."

"I thought so. Now let me give you a little piece of advice; a better fellow than Stone never lived, but he is always in the right about every earthly thing, and if you talk till Doomsday you will not convince him to the contrary, so I advise you not to try any more;" and I never did.

CHAPTER XIV.

PICTURE-SEEING IN BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.

Egg, Stone, and I went to Belgium and Holland for a few days, for the sole purpose of picture-seeing, and then the constant intercourse made Dickens' advice a little difficult to follow; but we got on very well until the money question cropped up. I was the only one of the party who spoke French. All arrangements and all payments, therefore, were made by me — a settlement being effected by my informing each of my fellow-travellers of the extent of his indebtedness to me at the end of every three or four days. Stone insisted on a detailed account of every item. This I declined to give him, when he thus addressed me:

"My dear Frith, if you think my desire for details arises from any doubt of your honesty you ought to be ashamed of yourself; but I really must insist on knowing exactly how the money has gone."

My answer was:

"My dear Stone, I will not give you a detailed account of the way in which I have spent your money; but I will tell you what you are indebted to me at the end of our time."

"That will not do for me," was the reply.

"Won't it?" said I, a happy thought having struck me. "Then just listen to this: I will tell you what you owe me, and you may pay it or not, just as you like." This settled the matter, and my little bill was met.

The following extracts from letters written at this time to my mother may interest:

"Bruges, *Sunday, July* 7, 1850.

"You may remember when Egg and I went up the Rhine some years ago, we passed through Bruges and Antwerp, and were then told there were some fine old pictures in a convent by one of the very early Flemish painters. This artist flourished the sword as well as the pencil, and he was seriously wounded at the battle of Nancy; he was taken to the hospital of the nunnery, and lay at the point of death for many months. At last the care and good treatment of the worthy nuns prevailed, and his wounds healed. To show the strength of his gratitude, he painted and presented to them several of his largest and best works—all Scriptural subjects, of course—and they have remained in the possession of the sisterhood ever since, much to their profit; for the exhibition has proved so attractive, and has existed for so long, that the convent is the richest in Belgium.

"We were now—1850—informed that there was another collection of pictures well worth a visit, but it was only to be seen after service. So after dinner we got a man to show us the way, and very soon we pulled the convent bell, but to no purpose. It wanted still some twenty minutes to the proper hour (so a woman screamed out for our information), and there was nothing for it but to wander about and kill the time. When we rang again, the large doors opened—no one could see by whom; we entered, and they closed behind us in the same mysterious manner.

"Across a courtyard, and there was another bell to ring; this time the door-opener was visible enough in the form of a young nun, very pretty, the meekest, mildest-looking creature. She stood looking down with her hands crossed while we walked in. Without a word she motioned us to the room where the pictures were, shut the door upon us, and vanished; and so nipped in the bud some most elegant speeches that were brewing for her entertainment. A single glance sufficed to show that we had been deceived; for the collection displayed, in that holy place, every vice of which a picture could be guilty. There were a good many, but they were bad without exception. There was nothing to stop for; but how to get away from them! the doors were shut, and there was nothing for it but patience, and the hope that the pretty nun would reappear. At last Egg discovered one picture not quite so bad as the rest, and he called Stone and me to look at it. How long we had been studying it I can't tell, but happening to look round, I was not a little startled at an apparition behind me, in the shape of an old, ugly, grim nun, standing as silent as a statue. How she came there puzzles me to this moment. I was so taken aback that I forgot my French, and spoke to her in English, though what I said I know no more than she did. Her head shook slowly, implying, I suppose, that the study of the English language had been neglected in her education. She then turned quietly round in a dreadfully ghostlike manner, and stalked away. In less time than I take to write about it, another apparition presented itself; but this time it was our pretty nun again, who immediately informed us, with the smile of an angel, that she spoke a little English, but very 'leetel.'

"Stone (who, being by far the best-looking of the trio, did all the gallantry during the journey) here struck in with the elegant speech he had prepared some time before; but his ideas didn't flow in their usual limpid course, which somewhat surprised me, till I saw that the old nun had followed her pretty sister very closely, and had fixed her leaden eyes upon poor Stone, to the utter destruction of his fine speech.

"The pretty nun and her body-guard accompanied us into the chapel, which smelt overpoweringly of incense. There were the cushions that seemed as if they had just been knelt upon; the wax candles, the offerings, etc. The old nun instantly went down on her knees, pulled out a little black book, and prayed fervently, as if she felt she had no time to lose. The pretty nun told us in the most charmingly simple manner that they never went out, they knew nothing about the world, they spent their time in teaching poor children; and that their chapel was dedicated to 'The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.' I shall never forget her way of pronouncing the last few words; there was a timid solemnity about her broken English inexpressibly charming. As soon as the old nun (who I forgot to tell you had a beard) saw we were leaving the chapel, she made an end of her prayers, shut up the little black book, and followed us closely. There was nothing more to see, so I prepared to pay, and at the door I put a franc, the usual sum given, into the pretty nun's hand. She turned very red, and I saw there was something wrong. The old nun, who had her leaden eye on everything, gave her a nod; and then she came up to me and said in her pretty way that each person must pay half a franc, and as there were three of us, I had given too little. 'It was for the poor children,' she said. So instead of another half-franc, we gave her a whole one, and so came away. . . ."

"Ghent, *July*, 1850.

"After Bruges we went to Ghent, where there are many pictures, and, as a city, it is particularly interesting. The people at the hotel at Bruges recommended us to a hotel at Ghent, and as we had been uncommonly well treated at the former place we followed their advice, and the consequence was we were located in the best hotel in the place. Ghent, as you perhaps know, *is* the principal town of Flanders, and *was* one of the richest cities in the world, famous for its manufactures of all sorts, especially cloths, and for the vigorous stand constantly made by the merchants against unpalatable taxes and against what they justly considered the misgovernment of the counts of Flanders. Many times were they defeated, and as often had to send the principal offenders, with ropes round their necks and only covered by their shirts, to beg for mercy from such men as Charles the Bold, and also from the Spaniards, who then held all the Low Countries. The most beautiful remains of domestic architecture to be found in Ghent are the houses built by the Spaniards. I could fancy I traced something Moorish in some of the Spanish buildings. The wicked Duke d'Alva, who united in his disposition the most ferocious cruelty with the most intense religious bigotry, has left his mark on Ghent to the present moment, for he sent a cannon-ball bang through the centre of the principal bell at the top of the famous Bell Tower. One of the scenes of Taylor's play of 'Philip Van Artevelde' is laid in the Bell Tower of Ghent. This last-named person was one of those who, possessing great powers, occasionally raise themselves above their fellows, and suffer in consequence. Van Artevelde did more to raise Ghent to its commercial prosperity than all the rest of the merchants put together. He was made chief magistrate, and of course became odious to many on account of his success; and his enemies at last persuaded the people that he intended to *sell* them to the King of England; and one day, when he had returned from England, his house was stormed, and he was torn to pieces. His house still exists, and there is a tablet recording his destruction. Of all the commissioners, as they are called (persons who are hired by strangers to show the sights of the town), the one at Ghent was the most intelligent. He was exceedingly angry if we didn't admire all that he showed us. His knowledge of pictures was small, and, therefore, he occasionally directed our attention to great rubbish, and his rage when we found fault was laughable. However, he certainly took us to one picture—'St. Bavon,' by Rubens—that we praised to his heart's content. We told our commissioner our principal object was pictures, and that he must take us where there were the best. He told us, with a knowing look, he would show us the finest in the world, and great was his disgust when we turned up our noses. I couldn't understand him, as he spoke Dutch to the man who had charge of them; but I never saw contempt stronger on anybody's face in all my life: he evidently thought we were affecting a taste for pictures, knowing nothing about them. Our friend had but one arm (the left one), and we were curious to know how he had lost its fellow. It appears he was unable to restrain his curiosity during the Revolution (at the time of the separation of Belgium from Holland), and he must needs go among the crowd who were being driven backwards and forwards by the soldiery. Seeing many people killed about him, he thought he was not in a particularly safe position, and the sooner he got to his own home the better. After one of the charges by the military, he found himself within a few yards of his own door. It was shut, of course; he raised his right arm to ring the bell, when whiz! bang! came a ball and shattered it—'So I was obliged to ring with my left hand, sir,' concluded our irritable friend. There is a very remarkable religious establishment in Ghent called the Great Béguinage; it is quite a little town surrounded by water. You enter through a sort of half-fortified gateway, and there are streets and squares, all in miniature proportion, like any town. The place contains more than six hundred nuns, all living alone in separate houses; they have left their worldly names outside the gates, and are known by the names of different saints, adopted according to their fancy, and painted over every door. They have a beautiful chapel, in which they may be seen any evening by strangers; it is only by attending the chapel that you can see them assembled, otherwise your knowledge is limited to an occasional sight of a solitary nun as she walks quietly through the little streets to her own home, returning, perhaps, from some sick person's bed in the town. They have their property at their own separate disposal, and they can leave the convent if they are so inclined. This is a very singular regulation, and it is their boast that, though they have existed as a body many hundreds of years, there has never been an instance of secession.

The 'Grand Béguinage' is the only religious establishment that was not molested by Bonaparte. He considered it so well calculated to do good, and its laws framed on so excellent a plan, that he showed the good nuns the light of his countenance, and never interfered with their quiet duties. . . .

"I must not forget to tell you of an incident that took place the night we slept at Ghent. The day had been close, sultry, and oppressive, not a breath of air stirring, and I think it was pretty well midnight before we went to bed. We generally managed to get our bedrooms together, or as nearly so as might be; and it happened that Stone and I were placed near each other. The partition that separated the rooms was thin, and we could talk comfortably through the walls. When our candles were extinguished, we found our rooms as light as day with the moonlight. We both got up, opened our windows, and leaning out we paid the lovely night many compliments. It was certainly exquisite—our windows overlooked the inn garden—the trees and walks, and the white statues looking charming in the moonlight. Perhaps we talked rather loud; whether we did or not, somebody heard us, for I was in the middle of a lovely speech to the moon (which Stone was laughing at, by-the-bye), when the head of a woman with a night-cap on it was poked out of the window beneath me, and a vixenish voice said, in unmistakable English, 'Perhaps you will be good enough to remember there are other people in the hotel besides yourselves, and they are not fond of such noises in the middle of the night as you are making.' The vixenish face disappeared, and down went the window. Stone finished his laugh at my speech rather louder perhaps than the lady liked, and wishing her a very good-night, we went to bed."

"BRUSSELS, 1850.

"We had received such unfavorable accounts of the pictorial treasures at Brussels that we should have passed over that place altogether but for the fact of our having accepted letters of introduction to two of the most famous artists of Belgium, Messrs. Gallait and Geefs, whose acquaintance we were very desirous of making. See us then, immediately after our arrival at 'Belgium's capital,' hiring a carriage and a commissioner—a horrible rascal, by the way—determined to see everything as quickly as possible. First of all to Mr. Gallait, who lived in the outskirts of the town; a long and wearisome journey. Our horses seemed to have been in the employment of an undertaker, and no whipping would prevail on them to quicken their funereal pace. And the long, regular streets! up one, down another, all so much alike that I could fancy we were continually going up and down the same hot street for a punishment. At last the gates of Brussels were passed, and we reached Mr. Gallait's, whom we fortunately found at home. If one might judge of the prosperity of the artists in Belgium by the style in which Gallait seems to vegetate, it would appear that the sooner one takes up one's bed and goes to Brussels the better; but the great painter's account of the patronage he has received, and the evident comfort in which he lives, do not agree in the least; for he told us that since he had been working in Belgium, for nine years, he had sold but two pictures to private buyers, the State being the patron—how unlike England! Gallait's house is large and splendidly appointed, with a lovely garden and the best studio I ever saw. He is a remarkably handsome man, very dark, with a long, black beard. Not a word of English could he utter, so I was obliged to be spokesman. We had not come at a good time, he said, for he had little to show us—chiefly portraits, but those very good and very English in the style of painting. When our queen was in Belgium she gave Gallait two commissions, which he executed, and the two pictures are now at Windsor. There were many small pictures and sketches in his room unsold, "*malheureusement*," as he said. We went from Gallait's to the Palais de Justice, where is a colossal work by him—the abdication of one of the kings of Spain in favor of his son—which raised the painter still higher in our estimation. Our next visit was to Mr. Geefs, the sculptor, and mighty polite he was, speaking capital English. A voluble, energetic little chap; it was quite pleasant to talk to him. His chief work is an immense group, composed of several figures, to commemorate those who fell in the Revolution. It is placed in a square called 'the Place of the Martyrs,' over the bodies of the martyrs aforesaid. To examine it, you must descend into a kind of vault, where may be read in letters of gold the names of those 'slain in the defence of liberty,' as the old soldier custodian expressed it. There were vast numbers from all parts; their places of abode inscribed after each name. Some from Italy, some from Ireland, and one or two Englishmen among them. We felt the policy of thus 'provoking the silent dust with honor's voice,' especially with such people as the Belgians, many of whom would almost sacrifice their lives for the sake of a corner among those gilded names. Imagine the powerful incentive on future occasions, when they know that if they fall their families will be provided for, and their names go down to an admiring posterity in letters of gold.

"'Now remember,' said Stone, being dreadfully out of temper with our commissioner, who wanted to take us to see lace-making and nonsense of that sort—'remember, I say, that pictures are our object, and as we have very little time, you will be good enough to take us only to places where pictures are to be seen.'

"'Very well, gentlemen; very well,' was the invariable reply; and as invariably did he propose botanical gardens, or crockery-shops, or a salamander—'a very rare beast' that was to be seen a few miles away. The conviction came upon us that he got a fee from the proprietors of these different objects of attraction, and we told him so by way of stopping his proposals; but nothing would do—he was the most persevering wretch I ever met with. We had been told of a large collection of modern Belgian and French pictures belonging to a merchant, a Mr. Van der Something. So without more ado we ordered our commissioner to take us to—what seemed to plain English comprehension—a large establishment in the grocery business. We walked into a large shop, and were told by an old lady who was serving behind the counter—Mrs. Van der ——, I have no doubt—that if we would do her the honor to give ourselves the trouble to walk 'down there,' waving her hand gracefully towards an avenue of tea-chests, orange-boxes, etc., etc., we should arrive at 'the picture-gallery.' We followed her directions, and without losing our way among the groceries, we reached the pictures and Mr. Van der —— himself, who was playing the part of showman to some ladies and gentlemen who seemed in raptures with the pictures. 'And is this,' we all exclaimed, 'a display of the choicest pictures that the Belgian school can produce? if so, we may be justly proud of our own.' But what were we to say to the picture-loving grocer, who was all agape to catch our praise, and praise we could not? We made a shabby excuse of being pressed for time, and so left him with a firm conviction on his mind that we were three English fools who neither cared for pictures nor understood them.

"'Now, gentlemen,' said the commissioner, 'there is only the Museum where there are pictures, not good ones' (there was nothing to pay there, so our friend could receive no bribe); 'so you will perhaps have time to go and see the lace-making; it is really—'

"'Confound both you and the lace! Why the devil don't you cease to bother us!' said Stone.

"'Very well, gentlemen; very well.'

"So to the Museum we went, and found a very large and indifferent collection, scarcely a good picture in the lot; some real Rubens, but very poor ones. There is really nothing that one remembers with pleasure. This finished our picture-seeing, and we were nearly finished ourselves with the intolerable heat and dust.

"'Now, then, drive to the hotel as fast as these undertaker's horses of yours will go.'

"'Very well, gentlemen—very well; but there is a salamander to be seen in the garden of—'

"'D—n the salamander and you too!' said Egg.

"'Very well, gentlemen.'

"And to the hotel we went, and soon after found ourselves at the station, attended by our commissioner, whose services were required to look after the luggage. I think the fellow felt he had not made an agreeable impression upon us, for as we were sitting in the train on the point of starting for Antwerp, he put his ugly face in at the window, and said:

"'I beg pardon, gentlemen, but if you should come to Brussels again, I would advise you by all means to see the salamander: you have not such a thing in—'

"We all three gave him our blessing, and in the midst of 'Very well, gentlemen—very well,' we left for Antwerp."

ANTWERP, *August*, 1850.

"Stone not being well, Egg and I started early on our pictorial pilgrimage. Antwerp, of all Belgian towns, is richest in the pictures of Rubens. In Antwerp he lived, and there he died; his body lies in the church of St. Jacques, under the high-altar of a little chapel in one of the side aisles. One of his finest pictures decorates the altar, the subject being a holy family with attending saints. The handsomest of Rubens' wives represents the Virgin; the great painter himself is contented to play the inferior part of St. George, while his children disport themselves as cherubim of ravishing beauty. There can be no doubt that Rubens greatly honored Antwerp, and in these latter days Antwerp has returned the compliment by placing a large statue of him in the Place Vert, by calling streets and hotels after him, and by placing the chair in which he sat, wreathed with immortelles, in the Museum, where his works glow with colors that seem as fresh after two hundred years as if they had just left the artist's palette. Rubens was certainly one of the greatest geniuses the world has ever produced, and the rapidity with which his pictures were painted—if we may believe tradition—is almost as wonderful as the pictures themselves. It is said that the altar-piece at St. Jacques was begun and finished in six weeks! I am not disposed to dispute this, for granting the work to be an almost miraculous performance, it is very likely to have been produced in a miraculously short time. To such powers as this man possessed, nothing seems impossible in the form of pictorial achievement. I had seen the two grand pictures in the cathedral some years ago, and I am happy to say I am more able to appreciate them now than I was then. Sir Joshua Reynolds tells us that when he visited Antwerp seventy years ago, he lost much time in going from church to church in quest of Rubens' pictures. We were more fortunate, for though some of the finest are in the positions in which Reynolds saw them, great numbers have been moved and now form part of the national collection in the Museum."

The following gives my impressions of our journey to Rotterdam *en route* to the Hague:

"I will now continue my account of our wanderings. We left Antwerp with regret, and having the choice of going to Rotterdam, *en route* to the Hague, either by sea or by canal, we preferred the latter. The trip, all the way from Antwerp, is the pleasantest that can be imagined; there is the usual nuisance of the examination of luggage on the frontier of Holland as a slight drawback. The steamer stopped opposite a dirty-looking fishing town, and a couple of important functionaries belonging to the excise came on board and made themselves as unpleasant as possible. However, they found nothing contraband, so we were allowed to proceed on our journey. Dordrecht — or, as it is commonly called, Dort — was the birthplace and residence of Cuyp, one of the great luminaries of the Dutch school. The scenes of most of his works lay by and on the rivers and canals about Dort, and after seeing so many of this great painter's works, it was quite curious to meet at almost every turn of the river some spot that seemed familiar to us; and it was not till we remembered that we were in the locality of so many of Cuyp's pictures that we could persuade ourselves that we had not often visited the places that we now saw for the first time."

Here end the extracts from the letters written when the impressions they record were fresh. I think I must have written much about the Hague, so rich is that place in pictorial treasures. If I did, the letter has been lost; but as I have visited the Hague since, and my notes on the pictures may be found elsewhere in these reminiscences, the lost letter is of no consequence.

CHAPTER XV.

SERVICE OF ART IN DETECTION OF CRIME.

Stone painted charming pictures, which were engraved and very popular; notably a pair, "The First Appeal" and "The Last Appeal." Love was the theme of these and of most of Stone's work. The two "Appeals" were bought by Mr. Baring, and were injured in a fire that took place at that gentleman's house. "The Last Appeal" caught fire first, and much of the paint was burned from the canvas, "The First Appeal" being but slightly injured. On hearing of the fate that had befallen the pictures, Douglas Jerrold is reported to have said, "Dear me, 'The Last Appeal' was 'the first to peel.'"

Stone was one of the Dickens Theatrical Company, and played many good parts admirably; his handsome face and fine figure, conspicuous off the stage, were of great service to him upon it. He told me of one of Jerrold's sarcastic sayings, perfectly indifferent to its application to himself. Stone had replaced his chimney-pot hat by a travelling-cap, during one of the hot and dusty journeys of the company to Manchester. The hat was so placed as to make it the receptacle of much dust and dirt.

"Look here," he said to Jerrold, "my hat is half full of rubbish."

"It is used to that," was the reply.

I never sought Jerrold's acquaintance. I was afraid of him, for I dreaded his tongue. I was mistaken, no doubt, in estimating his character by the seeming brutality of some of the sarcasms he uttered, for those who knew him intimately all agreed in declaring Jerrold to be one of the kindest-hearted men living. Compton, the actor, agreed in this, but told me of an instance of Jerrold's ready wit, which, to the ordinary mind, scarcely bears out the amiable theory. Jerrold was roving about the West End in search of a house that he had been commissioned to hire for the season for a country friend. Compton met and accompanied him into a house, and in one of the rooms was a large mirror that reflected the visitor from top to toe:

"There," said Compton, pointing to his own figure, "that's what I call a picture."

"Yes," said Jerrold, "it only wants hanging."

I must now return to Ivy Cottage, where Egg lived for many years. At the corner of what is now Queen's Road stood an inn called the Black Lion; from that hostelry, and extending down the only part of the ground then built upon, was a high hedge, which enclosed Ivy Cottage and the garden surrounding it. The house was very old and very picturesque, and had long been the residence of the eminent engraver Reynolds, known as one of the best translators of his great namesake's works. Reynolds' workroom became Egg's studio; it was approached through the dining-room, in which so many of my happiest evenings were spent. Mulready, whose art needs no eulogy from me, became a frequent guest. It was some time, however, before he could be induced to accept Egg's oft-repeated invitations. I knew Mulready very well, and one day Egg begged me to try to discover Mulready's reason for so constantly declining his invitations.

"The truth is," said Mulready, "I don't want to meet Leech, who, I understand, constantly dines with you all."

"May I ask why, sir?" said I.

"Yes, I will tell you. You know the postage envelope that I designed, and which has been so mercilessly criticised — well, Leech caricatured it. I don't mind a bit about that; but what I think I have a right to object to is the insult offered to me by a little bottle in the corner of the caricature with a leech in it. He implies that I am a leech, a blood-sucker, in respect of the remuneration I have received for my art generally, and no doubt, also, for that confounded postal envelope in particular. Now, you know that my prices have never been extravagant," etc.

I was so amazed that any one could be ignorant of

Leech's usual manner of signing his drawings that I could scarcely find words to reply, and still more difficult was it to refrain from annoying the old artist by laughing in his face. Suffice it to say that I made the matter clear to Mulready, and obtained from him an eager promise to accept Egg's next invitation. Leech was present at the dinner first attended by Mulready, when he heard with amused astonishment, from Mulready himself, of his misunderstanding of the leech in the bottle. The two artists became great friends.

Mark Lemon, then editor of *Punch*, was a constant guest at Egg's dinners. He was occasionally accompanied by a friend whose society was delightful until he had taken the quantity of wine that usually makes ordinary people jovial; he then became quarrelsome, unless Dickens happened to be a guest, when the august presence generally saved Egg's wine, and ourselves from unpleasantness.

Lemon always watched the approach of inebriety, and on one occasion he said to me: "Look at B——, he is trying to peel an apple with the nutcrackers; so I shall have to carry him off very soon."

When Hans Christian Andersen was staying with Dickens, Lemon was invited to meet the celebrated Dane at dinner; and on the occasion Lemon was more than usually entertaining, so much so as to cause Andersen to say: "Ah, Mr. Lemon, I like you; you are so full of comic."

At one of Egg's dinners Mulready told us of an adventure with a highwayman in nearly the following words:

"I have lived somewhere or other in Bayswater all my life; and when I was a student at Somerset House, about the year 1805, I always walked along what is now called the Bayswater Road, down to the Strand and back again—no omnibuses in those days, and hackney-coaches were beyond my pocket. One bright moonlight night I had proceeded about as far as where the town-end of Westbourne Terrace is now—nothing but a country lane then; not a house of any kind near—when a man came out of the shadow thrown by a large tree, and, producing a pistol, addressed me in the usual robber fashion with—

"'Your watch and money, please.'

"'I am a poor artist,' said I. 'See, these are my drawings. I haven't got a watch; I have never been able to buy one.'

"'Your money then, and be quick!'

"All this time I was watching the fellow's face by the moonlight; it was very white, and I think he was more frightened than I was. I gave him all the silver I had about me; he then said 'Good-night' civilly enough, and started off towards London.

"I made the best of my way home, and before I went to bed I drew the man's face very carefully, and very like him, as the sequel will prove. The next morning I went to Bow Street with my drawing, in the hope that it might be recognized by the officers there, as being like some one known to them; but no. Several of them examined it carefully, and attentively listened to my story; but the face, they said, was new to them.

"'If you will leave the likeness here, sir,' said the chief 'runner,' 'we may perhaps come across the person it represents.'

"That event very soon happened; for, if my memory serves me, a fortnight had scarcely passed before I had a call from the Bow Street officer, who told me he believed my friend was caught; 'could I go with him at once? he had a coach at the door.' We rumbled away to a watch-house somewhere near Southwark Bridge. We entered the room, and found a man dressed like a sailor toasting a red herring over the fire. He turned at the noise made by the opening of the door, and I recognized my thief. I walked up to him and said:

"'How do you do?'

"'Pretty well, thank you, sir. Shall be better when I have put this herring out of the way.'

"'Ah! if you had confined yourself to putting herrings out of the way it would have been better for you,' said the officer.

"'Oh, gammon! I am innocent of that,' replied the sailor.

"'What is he supposed to have done now?' said I.

"'Why, sir, only murdering the toll-keeper on Southwark Bridge and robbing the place.'

"'Do you remember me?' said I.

"'No, sir; I never saw you before.'

"'What! not on a moonlight night in the Oxford Road?'

"'Couldn't have been me, sir—never was in the Oxford Road in my life.'

"The murder was proved as easily as I could have proved my charge against the man, and he was hanged."

Mulready was fond of attending trials of great criminals. He showed me drawings of many whose crimes and names are forgotten. I think it was about 1824 when Mr. William Weare was murdered by Thurtell. The circumstances connected with that crime are so well known as to render any recapitulation of them by me unnecessary. Mulready was in court during the trial, when he drew likenesses of Thurtell and his accomplices Hunt and Probert, and found his sketch-book serviceable for a strange purpose.

A portion of Weare's skull had been broken by Thurtell's pistol into several small pieces, which the surgeon, who was giving evidence, vainly tried to piece together, so as to fit them into that part of the skull that had escaped fracture. Seeing that the surgeon's nervousness rendered him quite incapable of obeying the judge's order, Mulready offered his services; and on the back of his sketch-book he fitted together the pieces of bone "as you would a puzzle"—he said to me—and handed them to the jury. Thurtell was hanged, and his body consigned to the surgeons. We had casts which had been taken from different parts of him at Sass's school, to help us in our anatomical studies. All new students were introduced to Thurtell's eyelashes, which had adhered to the plaster when the cast was taken, our practice being to rub the new-comer's nose into them.

I may give one more instance of the service art has been in detecting crime. My friend O'Neil, in passing a public-house opposite Kensington Church, was robbed of his watch. He was ascertaining the time by gas-light, when a man snatched it from him after a very short struggle, sprang into a gig that was standing at the door, and drove off. The time for observation was very short, but it was long enough to enable O'Neil to fix the man's face in his mind, and also upon paper when he got home.

The police were presented with the copy, and requested to look out for the original; who was soon after arrested and committed for trial. O'Neil's drawing was produced, and considered, together with his sworn recognition, sufficient proof of the man's guilt, in spite of a very able defence by his counsel, who ridiculed the drawing mercilessly, declaring it was as much like Julius Cæsar as the prisoner at the bar.

"The man was convicted," said O'Neil, "and the sentence was no sooner passed than there came a message from that impudent barrister asking me to let him keep the drawing, as he considered it such a capital likeness of the man."

It was possible to see into Ivy Cottage from the top of an omnibus, or any vehicle higher than the hedge that separated the house from the Queen's Road; and it was also easy to see tempting objects to thieves, for the sideboard in the dining-room, with much valuable silver upon it, was plainly visible. Whether Egg's riches were discovered in the way I have pointed out or not, was never known; but one night the house was burglariously entered, and silver of the value of more than a hundred pounds was carried off. Egg made a sketch of the scene that his dining-room presented on the morning after the robbery. He drew himself standing in his dressing-gown, ruefully contemplating some heaps of salt which the thieves had emptied on to his red-velvet easy-chair out of the silver saltcellars.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE "COMING OF AGE."

I MUST now take leave of Ivy Cottage, and return to more personal matter. The success that had attended the pictures of the "Merry-making" and "The Old Woman Accused of Witchcraft" encouraged me to further effort in the direction of large compositions.

Fear of modern-life subjects still possessed me. The hat and trousers pictures that I had seen attempted had all been dismal failures; and I felt sure, or thought I did, that unless a subject of tremendous human interest could be found—such an interest as should make the spectator forget the dresses of the actors in it—modern life was impossible; and as no such subject presented itself, I took refuge in bygone times; and, during my seaside holiday in 1848, I made a sketch for a picture to be called "Coming of Age," the period being about that of Elizabeth. The scene is laid in the quadrangle of an old English mansion. On steps leading to the house stands the young heir, listening to an address of congratulation read by an old man, who may be parish clerk. Groups of villagers, tenants, and others surround the reader, several of whom bring gifts. An armorer presents a helmet decked with flowers; a falconer's boy is in charge of two dogs (deer and blood hounds); an old woman, who may have been the young lord's nurse, with clasped hands invokes a blessing upon him; and in the background peasants and neighbors are regaling on an ox roasted whole, that affords a satisfactory *pièce de resistance.* Some noble relatives of the young heir stand behind him.

My authorities for the background were Hever Castle, and Heslington Hall, near York. This picture has been well engraved, and therefore may be so familiar to my reader as to make further description of it needless.

After the much greater difficulties of finding appropriate models, costume is one of the most troublesome details that a painter has to contend with. Many visits to the Print-room of the British Museum may be paid in vain. The authorities are difficult to find, and when found, and the masquerade-shop is rummaged, only to discover tinsel and theatrical absurdities in the shape of dresses that no human creature ever wore at any time, except on the boards of a minor theatre, the artist's trouble may be imagined. In these days there are persons learned in ancient dress, whose assistance to the painter is very valuable, and to be acquired at a reasonable price; but when the "Coming of Age" was painted no such advantage existed, and the dresses for my picture had to be made from the best authorities I could find. I was so fortunate as to see an ox roasted whole—a ceremony that was advertised to take place at the opening of a cattle-market at Islington.

I think neither sight nor smell were altogether pleasant, and the company was doubtful. I stood on a bench, from which I could sketch the huge roast, and at my feet stood a youth of somewhat criminal aspect. He was occupied innocently enough, when two men made their way through the crowd, one of whom seized the lad's hands, while the other instantly handcuffed him. I can hear now the click of the handcuffs and the lad's "Wot's this for?" and the thief-takers' reply: "You know what it's for, and you come along."

I find by my diary that the "Coming of Age" was begun on one of the last days in September, 1848, and finished in April, 1849; and if some of my young student friends could see my diaries for the last five-and-forty years, they would see a record of incessant work—no day, literally, without a line—that I do believe would surprise them. My work has never been interrupted, I am thankful to say, by illness, and I never allowed it to be interrupted by anything else.

In my early days I worked on Sundays—following the example of those about me—in spite of the remonstrances of my good mother, who used every argument she could think of to prevent my persisting in doing what she knew to be wicked; and being fully persuaded that even worldly success could never attend such doings, she finished a homily one day by telling me that if I "persisted in working on the Sabbath, I should never be worth a farthing as long as I lived."

In reply I said: "My dear mother, I don't defend working on Sunday for a moment; but with respect to the curse of poverty following such doings, you must remember Sir Joshua Reynolds always painted on Sundays, and he died worth seventy-three thousand pounds in the three per cents."

"That has nothing whatever to do with it," replied my mother.

This has always struck me as a delightful example of the logical faculty in the female mind.

In the production of a work of art, friendly or unfriendly criticism is of great value, but few advantages are more difficult to secure. Men paint in various styles, and the ordinary habit is for one's critic to be unable to identify himself with the intention of the friend whose picture he has to criticise. He cannot help you along the road you have chosen, because his own course of treatment would have been altogether different. Hence, some of the greatest artists I have known have been useless as critics; while other and very inferior painters, having both inclination and power to place themselves, as it were, on one's own standpoint, have been of infinite service. There are two kinds of critics: one may be too good-natured, and the other too severe—I have gained and greatly suffered by the latter. I always know when I have been successful by the savage way in which my friend attacks me. All lay criticism is, in my opinion, almost useless. There are exceptions, no doubt; and I recall one as I write, in the person of one of the smallest men conceivable—Peter Powell. Peter was the intimate friend of Washington Irving, Stewart Newton, R.A., and C. R. Leslie, R.A. In the autobiography of the last-named justice is done to the humorous side of Powell's character; his critical powers are not mentioned.

I made Peter's acquaintance while I was painting the "Coming of Age." He often saw the picture, and it was the better for his visits. As he sat behind me one day, he told the following story. I should premise that Powell was a clerk in the War Office, and during his usual holiday he joined a party of friends on an excursion to Switzerland, *via* the Rhine, leaving his mother (with whom, being unmarried, he constantly resided) at his house in London. From all I heard, the affection that commonly exists between son and mother was on Powell's side of extraordinary tenderness; and though what I am about to relate may seem to prove that a man of remarkable common-sense may be subject to superstitious terrors, the simple way in which Powell told his story, and my knowledge of his perfect truthfulness, leave no doubt in my mind that the events happened as he related them.

The party had reached Basle, having fully enjoyed the beauties of the Rhine; and, after a very fatiguing day, Powell retired to bed and was immediately sound asleep. How long he had slept he had no means of knowing, when he was awoke by what appeared to be the sound of his own name. At first he gave a dream credit for an illusion, and was composing himself for a second sleep, when, as it seemed, close to his ear, his name was repeated, and in the unmistakable voice of his mother. Further sleep was now out of the question. Powell rose from his bed, struck a match, and by its light he ascertained the precise time—*twenty-one minutes past three!* He lighted candles, dressed, and tried to read till daylight. There were no telegraphs, nor indeed railways, at the time of these events; and the uncertainty of the travellers' movements made communication by post almost impossible. Though Powell had hitherto laughed at the stories of the dead speaking to the living, to announce the time of their departure from this world, his experience of this night might prove the truth of what is so commonly believed; and so completely did this idea possess him that further participation in a pleasure-trip was out of the question, and, in spite of the earnest entreaties of his friends—armed with all the usual arguments used in such cases—he determined to return home as fast as post-horses could take him, and learn the worst.

"Never in my life," said Powell, "did I suffer so terribly. My mother had always been more than a mother to me—she was the cleverest, best of women. I thought the journey would never end; but end it did at last, and with a beating heart I went towards my home, henceforth to be desolate. The servant started and turned pale when she opened the door; I could not speak, but rushed past her, and, scarcely knowing what I did, I flung open the sitting-room door, and found my mother reading the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' She started like the servant, but without turning pale; on the contrary, I never saw her looking better, as she took me in her arms and said:

"'Good gracious, Peter! what has brought you back so soon? and what is the matter with you? What are you crying for? Do tell me what has brought you back before your holiday is half over!'

"'*You* did!' said I, when I could recover myself; 'you called me!'

"And many a laugh the dear old lady and I had over my spoiled holiday, and my stupidity in spoiling it. But, mind you, nothing will ever convince me that I was asleep, or dreaming, or suffering from indigestion, or that I did not distinctly hear my mother's voice."

Admission to the ranks of the Royal Academy carries with it many advantages. Among the most valuable, and sometimes the most abused, is the right to "the line" for eight works; and though that privilege has been curtailed in the present day by a sort of arrangement that no member shall *claim* to have more than four pictures conspicuously placed, certain favored individuals—sometimes the least deserving—are permitted to ignore the salutary regulation and parade their enfeebled powers, to the injury of the exhibition and to their own discomfiture. In my early days, the associates were seldom allowed to exhibit in the Large Room at all, and scarcely ever given more than one place upon the line; nearly all my own smaller pictures, including "Sir Roger de Coverley and the Spectator," "The Good-natured Man"—now in the Sheepshanks Gallery—and many others, were hung near the floor, or in dark and secluded corners. The "Coming of Age" was very kindly placed in one of the much-coveted angles of the Middle Room; the Press notices, then eagerly read by me, were on the whole favorable. Thackeray, advocating the more frequent illustration of modern life, asked, in a review of the exhibition, "Why, when a man comes of age, should it be thought desirable that he should come of the age of Elizabeth?" and another critic suggested that it would have been better if such an ill-drawn, idiotic youth as Mr. Frith represents had been cut off in infancy, and so been prevented from "coming of age" at all.

Between the production of such large compositions as the "Merry-making," "Witchcraft," and "Coming of Age" pictures, many small works were painted, and among them was one called "A Gleaner," a half-length of a girl carrying a sheaf of corn. I cannot claim the entire design of this little study, for it was arranged partly by Frederick Tayler, the then president of the Water-Color Society, who, being ambitious to try his hand in oil-colors, had come to me for some friendly lessons in a part of the art with which he was unfamiliar. Though hampered by a strange method, he succeeded in producing a charming study, which was immediately bought by Mr. Jacob Bell; and if the great demand for his water-color drawings would have allowed him time for different practice in oil, I have no doubt that my old friend—my very old friend, for he survives at the ripe age of eighty-seven—would have rivalled his own excellence in water-colors.

My little "Gleaner" became the property of a Mr. G——, of Birmingham, who dealt in wearing-apparel as well as pictures. My price, thirty guineas, was cheerfully paid. Before the picture left me it was seen by a Mr. Birt, who was forming a collection of small pictures, and by his suggestion I repeated the subject, but changing the half-length into a representation of the entire figure, with a background of Scottish mountain scenery. Before beginning the second picture I wrote to Mr. G——, asking his permission, as I felt bound to do, and he replied that he would consent on the condition of his having the refusal of the proposed picture. The background became of such importance in the new work that I feared to undertake it, and I proposed to Creswick that he should assist; to this he consented for "a consideration." The picture was finished; Mr. Birt saw it, and offered what appeared to me the monstrous sum of a hundred and fifty guineas for it. After many struggles between my modesty and my avarice, and after hearing from many friends that I should be a bigger fool than I looked—which I was assured was impossible—if I asked Mr. G—— a lower price than another was willing to pay, I accordingly wrote to Mr. G——, and received the following reply:

> "Dear Sir,—If I read your note correctly, and you ask the sum of 150 guineas for the picture of the 'Gleaner,' I beg to decline it.
>
> "Yours, etc., J. G——."

I was not surprised, and Mr. Birt was pleased—or he said he was—when he paid the largest price I had then received for so small a work. I can imagine Mr. G——'s disappointment if he heard years afterwards that he had neglected a good investment; for at the sale of Mr. Birt's pictures the "Gleaner" fetched seven hundred guineas. This picture, after passing through several hands, is now in the possession of Mr. Pender, in Arlington Street.

I hope in noticing strange instances of the caprices of value of my own works, I shall not lay myself open to a charge of vainglorious boasting; nor will I allow the fear of such an accusation to prevent my naming any instance that may occur to me which I think may illustrate the great demand for certain kinds of art, the production of others' as well as of my own hard-worked brush.

It was during the varnishing-days of the year in which the "Coming of Age" was exhibited that I first saw Sir William Allan, the intimate friend of Walter Scott and Wilkie. At luncheon-time a little gray old gentleman made his appearance, and was received with cheers.

"Who is that?" said I to Maclise.

"That's Wullie Allan," was the reply.

Wilkie had been dead some years, and there was much talk of him and his early life in London, deeply interesting to me. A great deal of it has escaped my memory, but the following anecdote, told by Mulready, may entertain others as it did me:

After the death of Wilkie's father—a Scottish minister—his mother and sister came to London and charged themselves with the care of Wilkie's home in Norton Street, where the eminent painter was producing year by year the works on which his great reputation will mainly rest. Mulready was his fellow-student—sometimes his model, as in the "Duncan Gray"—and so intimate as to be a constant guest in Norton Street. Mrs. Wilkie's health began to fail from the time of her arrival in London, and she became at last so seriously ill that recovery seemed almost hopeless. Mulready was constant in sympathy with Wilkie's anxiety, calling most days to make inquiry. Norton Street—now, I think, called by another name—was then so quiet that study could be pursued with comfort. Street-musicians found no encouragement, and pretty generally tried their fortune elsewhere. Great was Mulready's surprise then, on entering the long street one afternoon, to hear the distant sound of bagpipes. Strange, for not a piper was to be seen; and stranger still, the sound grew louder and louder as Mulready approached Wilkie's door, when it became evident that the performer was playing inside the house. Mulready knocked, not without the fear that his knocking might be drowned by the music, and Wilkie opened the door. Speech was impossible, and Mulready was taken into the parlor, where a Highlander was playing for dear life. When the music ceased Wilkie said: "Well, ye see the mother is not so well to-day. She said she would like to hear the music again, for she is aye fond of the pipes."

My second picture in the Exhibition of 1849 was taken from "Don Quixote," and represented the immortal Don at dinner with the duke and duchess. Don Quixote's hesitation to yield to the duke's invitation to take the head of the table—a position always offered to an honored guest—drew from Sancho a story which he thought appropriate to the occasion.

"Then thus" (quoth Sancho), "both of them being ready to sit down, the husbandman contended with the gentleman not to sit uppermost, and he with the other that he should, as meaning to command in his own house; but the husbandman, presuming to be mannerly and courteous, never would, till the gentleman, very moody, laying hands upon him, made him sit down perforce, saying, 'Sit down, you thresher! for wheresoe'er I sit, that shall be the table's end to thee.' And now you have my tale; and, truly, I believe it was brought in here pretty well to the purpose. Don Quixote's face was in a thousand colors, that jaspered on his brow."—*Don Quixote,* Part II., chap. xxxi.

This picture was a commission from Mr. Frederic Huth, in whose house in Palace Gardens it still remains, surrounded by companions of great excellence; notably a magnificent Constable, an exquisite Wilkie, and good pictures by many of our best painters.

It is always agreeable to be able to note instances of liberality, as well as intelligent critical supervision, during the execution of a work; and in my commission from Mr. Huth I experienced both. When I produced my sketch my employer asked me to name a price for the picture that would be satisfactory to me, and on my hesitating he named one himself, much in excess of what I should have demanded. To name a price for a picture before it is begun is always difficult, and even dangerous, to one party concerned or the other. Wilkie used to say, "No man can tell how a picture will turn out. You should never name your price till your work is done; it may prove to be worth more than you imagined—or less. It is just impossible to work up to a precise sum. Besides, ye ought to be thinking of money as little as possible." I think I succeeded in some respects very well in my "Quixote" picture; the Sancho and the Chaplain being thought successful, the Don less so, from the extreme—almost insurmountable—difficulty of giving to his figure the dignity that his appearance, the lank jaw and attenuated form, are so apt to destroy; and it is only in such hands as Leslie's that the difficulty disappears. On the whole, my reputation was advanced by the exhibition of the two pictures.

It was about this time that I painted, in conjunction with my friend Ansdell, a picture called "The Keeper's Daughter." The subject was simple enough—a pretty girl feeding dogs in a Highland cottage—Ansdell being responsible for the animals, I for the figure and the rest of the picture. H. T. Ryall, to whom we owed the commission for "The Keeper's Daughter," was an engraver of the first rank; his finest work, perhaps, being a translation of Wilkie's "Columbus." The print from our joint performance was successful, and the picture, having served its purpose, was disposed of by its proprietor; under what circumstances I never knew. A few years after the picture had disappeared, I was taken by a friend to see a large collection belonging to a Mr. F——, a retired tanner, who had a mansion at Blackheath. I was warned that Mr. F—— had been the victim of a certain dealer, from whom nearly all his pictures had been bought at a cost of many thousand pounds, and that some of them were spurious. Mr. F—— received my friend and me with great politeness, and before he showed us his collection, he so seriously begged for our candid opinion as to give rise to the idea in my mind that, from some cause or other, doubts of the pictures' excellence or originality, or both, had taken root in his mind. Every room was filled with pictures, and the staircases were lined with them. One of the first to be noticed was of an Italian boy, with hurdy-gurdy and white mice, in which the hand of a member of the British Artists in Suffolk Street was easily traced, and I named him.

"Oh, no!" said Mr. F——; "that is by Eastlake, your president, you know." Anything less like Eastlake's work it would be impossible to imagine. "I paid a large sum for that picture, because it is a subject not often attempted by Eastlake."

The vilest daubs were shown us as genuine Wilkies, Turners, Websters, etc. Two red herrings hanging against a realistic deal-board were by Turner; a Holy Family by Webster, and so on; indeed, all the pictures were as curiously unlike, in the subjects peculiar to each artist, as they were in manner of production. After going through a series of terrible examples of bad art, Mr. F—— said:

"Now I will show you a picture by an unknown painter; I bought it in Wardour Street as a Landseer. Here it is; you shall judge for yourselves. I know it is not a Landseer, and I think you will agree with me that, great as Landseer is, he never equalled my 'Daniel in the Lions' Den.'" So saying, our collector uncovered a picture so vile as to make us wonder that ignorance could be so great as to find merit in such a thing. "There," said Mr. F——, "I think you will agree with me that Landseer never painted such a picture as that."

"I agree with you, sir," said my friend; "Landseer could not paint such a picture to save his life."

We saw many Landseers, every one spurious.

"Now," said Mr. F——, pointing to a mahogany box, "I have here a Landseer which I only show to particular friends." He unlocked the case, and lo! my "Keeper's Daughter!" "I gave twelve hundred guineas for that, and I consider I got it at a bargain."

This was too much. Silence would have been criminal.

"Sir," said I, "you have been cheated; that picture is the joint production of myself and Mr. Ansdell."

"Oh, come now—you don't mean to say that!" in accents of alarm.

"Indeed, I must say it; and, after much consideration, I feel it to be a duty to tell you that scarcely a picture in your house is painted by the artist whose name is attached to it."

"Why, I have got a warranty with lots of them!"

"Get your money back then, if the law will give it to you," said I.

Mr. F—— was silent for some moments; he then said:

"All the Landseers, do you say?"

"Yes," said I; "all."

"Do you think Mr. Landseer would come here and confirm that?" said Mr. F——.

"I am sure he would; and if you desire it, I will speak to him immediately on the matter."

To end the story, Landseer went to Blackheath, accompanied by his brother Charles, when he endorsed our opinions, of course so far as his own supposititious doings were concerned. But, after all, there *was* a Landseer in the collection, in the shape of an old lion, the size of life, which was used as a chimney-board at Charles Landseer's house, and painted by that artist, but elevated in the Blackheath collection into a splendid position on the walls, with the advantage of a superb frame and a curtain before it. Mr. F—— had not confined his admiration for art entirely to modern specimens. A few ancient pictures, or what he thought such, had a room to themselves. Among the rest were three pictures—a Quentin Matsys, a Vandyke, and a Wouvermans. It cannot be denied that merit and originality in works of art are matters of opinion, more or less valuable according to the taste and knowledge of those who are for the moment in the judgment-seat; but it sometimes happens that opinion may be backed up by incontrovertible proofs. Mr. F——'s Quentin Matsys, for instance, contained several figures dressed in the costume of George II., and as the great Dutch painter lived some hundreds of years before George II., the picture could not be his work. The Vandyke represented Charles II. in about the fiftieth year of his age. Mr. F—— produced documents tracing the descent of the portrait from the time of Vandyke, with the names of the noble owners whose different collections it had adorned.

"I fear, sir," said I, "that I can prove to you that it is impossible that Vandyke can have painted that picture."

"Can you?" said Mr. F——, who had become a little irritable. "I should like to see you do it."

"You shall," said I. "Now tell me, how old does Charles look in that picture?"

"How old?" said Mr. F——; "what on earth can that have to do with it? How old? well, I should say pretty nearly fifty."

"Just so," said I. "Well, then, as Vandyke died when

Charles II. was twelve years old, he could not have painted the king when he was fifty."

The Wouvermans was a bad modern copy of a well-known picture in the National Gallery. Mr. F—— assured us that all good judges considered his picture the original, and that in the National Collection a copy.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUBJECTS FROM GOLDSMITH, SMOLLETT, AND MOLIÈRE.

The Sheepshanks Collection, now at South Kensington, was founded by one of a class of collectors extinct at this time. Mr. Sheepshanks was a sleeping partner in a cloth firm at Leeds. His London residence was at Rutland Gate, where, in a charming gallery, the greater part of his collection was displayed. Like all people possessed of art treasures, Mr. Sheepshanks was annoyed by the importunity of strangers, whose requests to see his house and his pictures were always refused, and not always in the language of Lord Chesterfield. Being a bachelor, and, though early in life, a very hospitable one, the expense of his household could not have been great, nor could the prices of his pictures, for he told me that he never possessed an income of more than fifteen hundred a year; and out of that, to use his own words, "I have always paid my way, and paid for my pictures, too." Mr. Sheepshanks may, I think, be considered to have been somewhat irascible. The sight of a card—even if it bore the name of a friend—offered by strangers as a ticket of admission was treated with contempt. I happened to be in the gallery with him one day, when his servant presented the Duchess of ——'s card, accompanied by that of one of the most eminent R.A.'s.

"And there's a lot of ladies," said the girl.

"Is Mr. ——," naming the R.A., "with them?"

"No, sir."

"Then tell them to go to the —— ; no, I don't mean that. Say what you like. Pictures not shown. Say anything, only don't let them in." He then turned to me and said, "Now, would you believe it? I've told that man a thousand times that I should be delighted to see his friends, but he must come with them. How do I know where people may pick up other people's cards? He is as careless a fellow as ever lived. He may drop his address-cards as likely as lose other things, as he constantly does."

When in the humor Mr. Sheepshanks would name the prices that his pictures had cost him. I am afraid to trust to my memory for many instances; but I can well recollect the astonishment with which I heard of the incredibly small sums for which he had acquired some of the most wonderful of Landseer's works. One of the largest —"The Departure of the Highland Drovers"—was a commission from the Duke of Bedford for £500. When the picture was finished the duke said he was very poor, and if Landseer could find another purchaser he (the noble patron) would be glad to resign "so beautiful a work." Another neglect of a good investment; for, undoubtedly, if "The Departure of the Highland Drovers" were sold now it would bring quite as many thousands as the hundreds for which the duke might have purchased it. Mr. Sheepshanks always chuckled when he told how, having heard of the duke's wish, he took immediate steps to gratify him. The exquisite "Jack in Office," "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner," "The Tethered Ram," etc., were all bought for ludicrously small prices; and any exclamation from a bystander to that effect was sure to elicit from Mr. Sheepshanks a somewhat petulant explanation: "Well, I always give what is asked for a picture, or I don't buy it at all; never beat a man down in my life. Never sold a picture, and I never will; and if what I hear of the prices that you gentlemen are getting now is true, I can't pay them, so my picture-buying days are over."

And over they were in 1850, when I had the honor of receiving Mr. Sheepshanks' last commission, and the pleasure of executing it in the form of the "Scene from Goldsmith's 'Good-natured Man,'" now at the South Kensington Museum. As this picture can be seen by anybody, I may be spared the somewhat unpleasant task of talking about my own work. The picture represents Mr. Honeywood introducing the two bailiffs to Miss Richland (his *fiancée*) as his friends, and vainly endeavoring to make them conduct themselves as gentlemen. The following is the dialogue, in Goldsmith's words:

"HONEYWOOD. Two of my very good friends, Mr. Twitch and Mr. Flanigan. Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony."

"MISS RICHLAND. Who can these odd-looking men be? I fear it is as I was informed. It must be so (*aside*)."

The year 1850 found me embarked on another large composition—"Hogarth before the Governor of Calais." I forget in what book I found the anecdote of Hogarth's adventure at Calais, where he was arrested as a spy in the act of sketching the "Gate at Calais" for the background of his famous picture of that name; but the truth of the arrest is well established, for he has represented himself as sketching the gate with the hand of a French soldier touching his shoulder. He was taken before the governor, who informed him that "if peace had not been signed between France and England a few days previously he would have been hanged on the ramparts."

My diary for 1850 presents the usual record of foggy days and disappointing models ; in short, difficulties without number more or less successfully battled with. As I could not have Hogarth to sit for me, I had to keep a bright lookout for some one resembling him. After much searching and delay I found a suitable model, not unlike the great moralist in body, but in mind as opposite as the poles. For the French soldiers I was fortunate, for I discovered two individuals whose political views were so much at variance with the established government at that time in power in France as to necessitate a precipitate flight from that country to this, and whose faces matched their principles, and suited me exactly. I must acknowledge that they predicted pretty accurately the career of Napoleon III., than whom (according to them) no such villain ever existed. "A republic—no! Monarchy—thousand thunders, no! A general division of property and begin again—that, monsieur, is the panacea, the only substantial equality and fraternity." I painted the governor's clerk from an old man who assured me that his grandfather was at the execution of Charles I. He made the matter clear to me at the time, but I have since found a difficulty in working out the problem; the old model was nearly ninety in 1850. He belonged to a very long-lived family, whose representatives must have been remarkable in many ways, for they were always born when their fathers were at least eighty years old. Granting the truth of this, it is just possible that a boy of ten (my model's grandad) might have sat on his father's shoulders, so that he could look over the heads of the soldiers who surrounded Charles's scaffold, and have seen that sovereign's obstinate head severed from his body. I leave my readers to work out this little sum.

I have said elsewhere that associates' pictures were seldom if ever allowed to enter the Holy of Holies of the academicians—the "Large Room" in Trafalgar Square. Before "Hogarth" and "Louis XVI. in the Temple"—Ward's *chef-d'œuvre*—were hung in that envied locality, I can only remember one example to the contrary—Redgrave's "Poor Governess." If the veteran R.A.'s could have heard the ribald comments of some of the associates on what we called their dog-in-the-manger monopoly, how we declared the "Big Room" to be fast becoming a hospital for incurables, some of us would have been longer in becoming academicians than we were. I can well remember my difficulty in keeping my temper when I was told by one of the oldest and most incompetent of the R.A.'s that a pretty storm had been raised by my picture being "most improperly" placed in the Large Room. "Hogarth" was a commission from a Lancashire worthy, who repudiated his order, and the picture was transferred to a firm of publishers, by whom an engraving from it was produced, without much success either as a print or a publication.

Smollett's "Roderick Random" suggested one of the best of my smaller productions; it was called "A Stage-coach Adventure," and represented the interior of a lumbering vehicle that required three days to go from York to London, and was named "the York and London fast coach, the Highflyer." The passengers represented were a Quaker and his family, a British officer, and a lady with her daughter. One great difficulty of the subject arose from the necessity for removing one side of the coach, in order to show the occupants, thus causing the coach to resemble too much, perhaps, the interior of a small room. Through the coach-window appeared the masked face of an ugly highwayman, who, with pistol thrust forward, made his usual demand. The Quakeress screams and throws herself back in the coach; the Quaker hides his pocket-book under the cushions; the mother of the young lady—the *vis-à-vis* of the Quakeress—offers her purse to the robber; and the young lady falls, fainting, on to the shoulder of the captain, who is paralyzed with fright. The motto from "Macbeth" which I quoted in the catalogue, "What! a soldier, and afeard!" seemed very appropriate.

Among my friendly critics on many occasions was George Cruikshank, and it was on discussing the "Stage-coach Adventure" that he told me of one of his own. When a little boy he was placed at a school at Edgeware, and on one occasion, after spending his Christmas holidays at home, he was returning in a post-chaise in charge of his father, when they were stopped by a highwayman. Among other Christmas gifts which the boy was taking to school was a long tin trumpet. Cruikshank's father, alarmed by the galloping of a horse, had looked from the window of the chaise and pretty well assured himself of the character of the rider; he then turned to the boy and said: "Now, George, the moment we are stopped you poke that trumpet broad end out of the window." The boy did as he was bid. The highwayman mistook the trumpet for a blunderbuss, turned, and rode back as rapidly as he had come. I have the illustrious artist's word for what will appear to most people incredible, namely, that this incident took place in what is now called the Edgeware Road. I cannot resist relating another adventure of Cruikshank's, for the truth of which I think I can safely vouch. For many years before his death Cruikshank was not only "a total abstainer" himself, but a persistent advocate of that principle by pen and pencil on all occasions —in season and out of season. His wonderful series of designs called "The Bottle," and his picture in the National Gallery called the "Worship of Bacchus," are sufficient proofs of his advocacy by the pencil. His many pamphlets speak for his pen ; while his Exeter Hall speeches and chair-taking have again and again proved the sincerity of his convictions. It was very late one night after attending a temperance meeting, that, on letting himself into his house in the Hampstead Road, Cruikshank saw the figure of a man carrying a bundle disappear through a door leading into his garden. All the household were asleep. There could be no doubt of the character of the man with the bundle, who was clambering over the wall into the neighboring garden, when Cruikshank caught him by the leg. The artist was a powerful man, which the burglar soon discovered, as he resigned himself into the hands of his captor. Fortunately a policeman happened to be passing the house ; the thief was given into his charge, and the three walked off towards the station. I have said that Cruikshank not merely never *lost* an opportunity of enforcing his principles, but he constantly *made* one ; and on the walk to the police station he lectured the burglar somewhat as follows : "Now, my friend, this is a sad position to find yourself in. It's the drink, my friend, the drink. Ah! I can smell it. Now look at me," pausing for a moment under a gaslight. "You see before you a man who for the last twenty years has taken nothing to drink stronger than water."

The burglar looked up at the artist and growled : "I wish to God I had known that ; I would have knocked your d—d old head off !"

"The fool thought I had weakened myself by leaving off alcoholic drinks. The reverse—the very reverse is the fact ; for let me tell you," etc., etc., etc. And so dear old George would lecture as long—or longer—than he could get a listener.

Cruikshank labored under a strange delusion regarding the works of Dickens and Ainsworth. I heard him announce to a large company assembled at dinner at Glasgow that he was the writer of "Oliver Twist." Dickens, he said, just gave parts of it a little "literary touching up;" but he, Cruikshank, supplied all the incidents as well as the illustrations. "Mind, sir," he said to me, "I had nothing to do with the ugly name Dickens would insist on giving the boy. I wanted him called Frank Steadfast." He also wrote the "Tower of London," erroneously credited to Ainsworth, as well as other works commonly understood to have been written by that author. My intimacy with Cruikshank enables me to declare that I do not believe he would be guilty of the least deviation from truth, and to this day I can see no way of accounting for what was a most absurd delusion. Dickens was very fond of Cruikshank, but he found him occasionally troublesome; he would see, or fancy he saw, a resemblance to an old lady friend of his in one of the characters in "Chuzzlewit" or "Nickleby," or some other of the serials then in course of publication, when he would say to Dickens, "I say, look here: Mrs. So-and-so has been to me about"—Mrs. Nickleby, perhaps—"and she says you are taking her off. I wish you would just alter it a little; the poor old girl is quite distressed, you know," etc., etc. This Dickens told me, and added: "Just imagine what my life would be if George was making the drawings for 'Dombey' instead of Brown, who does what I wish and never sees resemblances that don't exist!"

I now turn with reluctance to my own doings. I am indebted to lithography for three of the most faithful transcripts that have been made from pictures of mine. They are the work of an old student friend, Maguire, whose life as a lithographer was cut short by photography, a *science*, I suppose I must call it, which bids fair, in the modern shape of photogravure, to destroy line and all other styles of engraving as effectually as it has put a stop to lithography. When Charles Landseer, who made better puns than pictures, said of photography on its first appearance that it was a *foe-to-graphic* art, he little thought how completely his prophecy would be realized. I have suffered so dreadfully from translations of my pictures by photogravure that I hold the method in absolute abhorrence, though I admit that I have seen satisfactory reproductions of other works by this process.

My second subject from Molière, also taken from the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" (which, with the banquet-scene from that play and "Sir Roger de Coverley and the Spectator," were those referred to as so beautifully lithographed by Maguire), represented the reception of the belle Marquise and the Marquise Dorante by the Bourgeois, previous to the banquet so inopportunely interrupted by Madame Jourdain. He is shown as going through his three bows; and, finding himself after the second a little too near the lady, he is saying, with back still bent: "*Un peu plus loin pour la troisième, madame.*" A lackey is at the door of the dining-room, through which preparations for the banquet may be seen. I received a hundred and sixty pounds for this picture, but at what price it was acquired by Mr. Newsham, of Preston, I have no means of knowing. At the death of that gentleman the picture passed, with the whole of his fine collection, into the possession of the Corporation of Preston, as a free gift to the people of that town. At the South Kensington Museum there are small copies of the Molière pictures in the Jones Collection.

A beautiful girl, to whom I did but scant justice in my picture from Molière, was one of three sisters who were all favorite models at that time. The career of the prototype of the belle Marquise was not a little singular. She disappeared from artistic circles with the disregard, common to her sisterhood, for the necessities of those who had relied on being able to finish their work from the model who had sat for its commencement. Inquiry was fruitless. She had left her lodgings, and no trace behind her. I found myself in the stalls of the Haymarket Theatre at one of the last appearances of Macready, and in taking the usual indolent survey of the dress-circle through an opera-glass, I was stopped in the front row by the sight of a face that I knew so well, and an eye that when it caught mine indulged itself in something very like a wink. Sure enough, it was the belle Marquise; but instead of the homely cotton in which she was formerly dressed, the latest and most extravagant fashion had been called into play. Diamonds glittered on neck, arms, and head—she was transformed indeed. After a sidelong glance at a distinguished-looking middle-aged man at her side, the Marquise bestowed a little nod and smile upon me, and then resumed the aristocratic bearing that became her so admirably. I dare say I shall surprise my readers when I tell them that the noble-looking middle-aged man was indeed a nobleman who had married our model. I discovered the name of the bold aristocrat afterwards, and had the pleasure of reading the name of Lady —— among those of the happy people who were presented at court.

In speaking of Macready, I am reminded that it was about this time that great actor quitted the stage. In the early part of these pages I have said that no such acting as Macready's King John and Charles Kemble's Faulconbridge can be seen on the present stage; and while maintaining that opinion as regards a special play, and the remarkable combination of genius in the representation of it, I must not allow myself to forget that we have a tragedian who, as an "all-round man," is a far greater actor than Macready. In a few characters such as Virginius, William Tell, Rob Roy, and some others, Macready was, I think, unapproachable; but to compare his Hamlet or Shylock with Irving's rendering of these characters would be disastrous for Macready. That Macready had multitudes of admirers and "troops of friends" was manifested by the attendance of about six hundred men who gathered round him on the occasion of a banquet—inaugurated chiefly by Dickens—given to him on his retirement from the stage. The company was composed of representatives, more or less eminent, of science, literature, and art, to say nothing of numbers of Macready-worshippers from various ranks of life. In a letter to my mother, under date March, 1851, I record my impressions in the following extract:

> "I assisted, as the French say, at the Macready banquet last night. A great many of my friends were going, so I joined them. We had capital places close to Bulwer Lytton—who was in the chair—provided for us by Dickens, who had the management of the affair. He made an admirable speech; Thackeray also spoke well and very humorously. Macready, who speaks other people's words much better than his own, made rather a halting business of his oration. In returning thanks he said his heart was fuller than the glass which he held—that might easily have been the case, for the glass which he held was empty! I was close to Charles Kemble, who spoke right well. I never saw such a sensation as when he rose to

reply to the drinking of his health. I feel sure that most of the people there thought that the Kemble line had passed away years ago ; and when the old man rose, feeble and bent, but with the old stately bearing, and in the sounding and dignified, though somewhat shrill, voice peculiar to the Kembles, responded most happily to the toast, the *row* was deafening. Every man rose—glasses, napkins, even *decanters*, were shaken and waved about; the company seemed to have taken leave of their senses.

"My dinner cost me a guinea and a headache, besides a fight, or nearly one, for my hat and coat. Just fancy six hundred people all struggling at the same time at a small table to get their hats and go away. The waiters were all drunk, and that happy condition was no assistance to them in their efforts to distribute the hats to their owners; indeed, to judge from the maudlin way they tumbled and reeled about, one might fancy that they had been shipwrecked on a sea of hats and coats, and were in despair of ever reaching dry land. Every gentleman had been furnished with a ticket or number for his hat, and if you can imagine three or four hundred people screaming out different numbers, and the tipsy waiters smiling at them, and in the most soothing tones requesting them to have patience, you will understand what I had to go through. As to Stone, the last I saw of him was the upper part of his body; he was clinging to a pillar with one arm, and holding out his ticket with the other, kicking at the same time with both legs at the people behind him. Stone's treatment of his fellow-guests was not agreeable to them; there was a terrific row, a few policemen made a dash into the crowd—Stone disappeared; I saw no more—and thus endeth the Macready banquet."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HANGING COMMITTEE.

I now approach the time when the desire to represent every-day life took an irresistible hold upon me. My first venture in modern-life subjects took the shape of a small picture of a mother and child. The child was kneeling, saying its prayers in its mother's lap, with the wandering attention so common to children. The gray-and-black dress of the mother and the white night-gown of the child made a sufficiently agreeable arrangement of negative colors. The heads were characteristic, though—as was afterwards said in excuse for the failure as a publication—too like portraits. The picture was beautifully engraved by Stocks; but the finest engraving will not avert failure if the subject represented does not satisfy the many-headed, whose likings and dislikings are equally incomprehensible. A little study, done from a good-looking girl who was in my service as housemaid, had a great success as an engraving. I painted the girl not only in her habit as she lived, but in her habits also, for she was carrying a tray with a bottle of wine on it. The whole thing was simple enough. The picture was bought by Jacob Bell, who—convinced that there was what he called "copyright" in it—succeeded in extracting forty guineas from a well-known publisher, who, differing in opinion from Bell as to the value of the copyright, immediately transferred it, at a great loss, to another and more adventurous printseller. Bell presented me with the copyright money, and I heard with pleasure that the picture was placed in the hands of Frank Holl, afterwards A.R.A., an admirable engraver and most worthy man. Holl produced an excellent print from the little picture. I approved and it was published, after being—without my knowledge—christened "Sherry, sir?" What a thorn in my side did that terrible title become! I dined out frequently, and dreaded the approach of the servant with the sherry, for the inevitable "Sherry, sir?" rang in my ears, and reminded my neighbor at table of my crime. "A pretty thing enough, that servant-girl of yours; but how you could give her such a vulgar title I can't think." This was dinned into my ears so frequently that I determined I would try to get the obnoxious words changed into some less objectionable. I went to the publisher and unburdened my mind. "Change the title!" said he; "why, it's the name that sells it. We offered it before it was christened, and nobody would look at it; now it sells like ripe cherries, and it's the title that does it."

Before devoting myself to more elaborate compositions from modern life I determined to try to realize a scene that had always struck me as admirably adapted to pictorial representation, namely, the quarrel of Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, or, rather, the cause of the quarrel, for it is said that, in a moment of passion, Pope declared his love for the beautiful Lady Mary, who received the vows of the poet with astonishment that resolved itself into irrepressible laughter.

By any one acquainted with the character of Pope—and who is not?—the fearful blow that such treatment would be to a man so sensitive may be imagined; and the ample revenge he allowed himself to take in after-years be somewhat excused. Admirers of Pope objected to the subject as placing the poet in a humiliating position. Leslie, I remember, spoke to me strongly on that point; but the picture was done, and hanging on the Academy walls, when the objectors opened fire; so repentance, which I confess I felt, came too late. The truth was, I could not resist the dramatic effect of the two figures—the consuming rage of Pope, contrasted by the cruel laughter of the lady. My admiration and respect for Pope should perhaps have prevented me from exposing so great a man to ridicule and humiliation. *Mea culpa! mea culpa!*

Of all the authorities, and they were many, that I consulted for the likeness of Pope, the bust by Roubillac is the only one that conveys the man: there he is with features worn by suffering, but showing the intellectual strength that must have distinguished such a man. The portrait by Jervas in the National Collection, though interesting as giving a more or less correct rendering of the "shape and make" of the man, conveys no idea to my mind of his intellectual power. Reynolds said that no man could put more into a picture than there is in himself; if that be so, there was not much in Jervas, most of whose portraits are examples of what I once heard a painter say of a likeness of a strong-minded man: "The fellow," meaning his brother artist, "has made a likeness of So-and-so, certainly, but he has managed to knock out his brains." There are many so-called likenesses of Lady Mary, but they differ from each other nearly as much as do those of her namesake, the Queen of Scots. In Mr. Gibbons' collection there is a beautiful picture by Sir Joshua that is called Lady Mary; but I doubt if the dates will serve, for Sir Joshua could scarcely have painted the beloved of Pope in the prime of her loveliness. In Mr. Gibbons' picture the original could not have exceeded her thirtieth year, when Sir Joshua was a young and unknown man.

In my picture I fear I cannot claim much resemblance to the beautiful original, though my lady is handsome enough to be the cause of love in Pope or anybody else. An incident occurred in connection with this picture that is worth recording, as showing the way artists are sometimes treated by their—so-called—patrons. A collector, of a somewhat vulgar type, had long desired me to paint a picture for him. I showed him the sketch, and, to prove the culture of the gentleman, I may mention the following fact:

"What's the subject?" said he.

"Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Pope," said I; "the point taken is when Pope makes love to the lady, who was married at the time, and she laughed at him."

"The pope make love to a married woman—horrible!"

"No, no, not *the* pope—Pope the poet!"

"Well, it don't matter who it was; he shouldn't make love to a married woman, and she done quite right in laughing at him; and if I had been her husband I should—" etc.

"Very well," said I, "as you don't like the subject, we will say no more about it. I will paint you something else."

"Oh, no," was the reply; "I like to see a woman laugh at a man who makes an ass of himself. I'll take it. What's the figure?"

"Before I name a price," said I, "I must tell you that there is a condition attached to the picture which must be agreed to by whoever takes it; and that is that I may make a small copy of it for a friend. So, if you object to copies, as many people do, now is the time to say so."

The exact size of the intended copy was fixed, the condition and price, three hundred and fifty guineas, agreed to; and in due time the picture was finished and highly approved by my learned friend, who, I discovered afterwards, had never read a line of Pope, or, indeed, even heard of him.

When the exhibition was closed I wished to begin the copy at once; but my "patron" begged to have the picture for a few days, as he "wished to show it to some 'country friends.'" I let it go, and when I applied for it, according to agreement, the owner quietly defied me, and refused to carry out an arrangement to which he acknowledged he had consented. He then proceeded, without consulting me, to make terms with an engraver for the production of the picture in mezzotint—a process quite unsuited to it—pocketing a hundred guineas for the copyright. There are people so amiable as to submit to insult, and even injury, without complaining. I am not of that species, and my complaints were loud enough to reach the ears of my employer, who, to my surprise, made his appearance one morning at my house. I froze him by my reception, and declined to shake hands, to his great surprise.

"I hear you are annoyed because I can't allow you to copy my picture," he began.

"Did you or did you not consent to a copy being made when you bought the picture?" said I.

"Well, certainly I did; but all my friends say that a copy, ever so small, would take away from the value of the original."

This was too much, so I tried to close the interview by asking, in my loftiest manner and in stereotyped phrase, "To what am I indebted for the honor" (honor with sarcasm) "of this visit?"

"Well, look here" (I fear he said "look 'ere"), "I can't have a copy done; but I'll tell you what—I will give you a hundred pounds, and you can divide it with the gent you have to do the copy for, as a compensation like for the copy."

My reply was conveyed without speaking; for I went to the door, opened it wide, pointed out to the "gentleman" the way he should go, and he went out without another word. He died long ago. His pictures were sold at Christie's, where "Pope and Lady Mary" fetched twelve hundred guineas. No wonder, when such instances as the above—seldom so gross—can be multiplied by artists to any extent, that they should prefer dealing with dealers who understand art and artists, and can be legally bound to carry out (in rare cases, when moral binding is not sufficient) their engagements to the letter. A dealer, it should be remembered, has a variety of tastes to satisfy. What does not please one "client" may please another; but the "patron" may have a peculiar taste, or no taste at all, may be as full of whims and fancies as he is of ignorance, and then the life of the painter is not a happy one. For many years I have always sold my pictures to what is called "the trade," and have invariably escaped the tribulation that so often attends the patrons' patronage.

I will pass over many trifling pictures, which the profane would call "pot-boilers;" but, though some few may be open to that charge, I may speak of two that received as much careful study at my hands as anything that ever passed through them. Both were taken from Scott, one from the "Bride of Lammermoor," the other from "Kenilworth." They were painted for a man who was another disappointing specimen of the patron—a grumbling ignoramus who could not see the faults that really existed, but discovered plenty of his own making. He grumbled during the progress of the pictures, and grumbled when they were finished; and when he sold them—as he did very shortly—for a great deal more than he had paid for them, he grumbled because he had not got enough. These pictures are now in the possession of a man who appreciates them beyond their merits. Before they reached their present owner, Mr. Price—whose gallery in Queen Anne Street is filled with pictures, and frequently on Monday evenings with artists, who find the heartiest welcome and the best cigars, etc., always awaiting them—the pictures in question had passed through many hands, some clean and some very dirty, as I shall proceed to show. The scene from the "Bride of Lammermoor" is that in which Lady Ashton cuts the love-token from Lucy's neck and gives it back to Ravenswood. It happened that, the day after spending a very pleasant Monday evening in Queen Anne Street, I noticed, in Christie and Manson's usual Tuesday's advertisement, that a picture by me from the "Bride of Lammermoor" was to be sold. As I had then painted but one picture from that novel—and that one I had seen hanging in Queen Anne Street the night before—I was puzzled by the advertisement, and determined to see what the meaning of it was. What was my surprise to see on Christie's walls a fac-simile of Mr. Price's picture, or else the picture itself. Doubt as to which it was was put a stop to by Mr. Price himself, who looked at the picture with a puzzled air, and then looked at me without any change in his expression.

"Well," said I, "what on earth does this mean? I never made a copy of the picture—not even a sketch of it."

"Somebody has made a copy of it," said Mr. Price; "must have been done on its way to me by one of those rascally dealers, and sold as the original. Whose property is it?"

I found from Christie's the readiness always shown to remove from their walls whatever may have got there under false pretences; and the name of the owner of the spurious picture was disclosed. I need only allude to this gentleman to say that he was quite innocent of fraud; he was assured the picture was painted by me, and so perfect was the copy, even to the name forged upon it, that I should not have doubted its authenticity for a moment, if I had not had such convincing proof to the contrary. I requested to be allowed to destroy the copy, so as to prevent its "betraying more men;" but the owner objected, as the forgery was required to enable the victim to make the man from whom it was bought refund the purchase-money. Since the attempted sale at Christie's, I have found it necessary to repudiate the copy twice.

I suppose no man's works have been more frequently pirated than those of the eminent French painter, Meissonier. I am told that there is a cupboard in that artist's studio for the reception of such things; and when any fraudulent specimen is brought to that great painter for authentication, it is, in defiance of all opposition, consigned to the cupboard, and the key turned upon it. Whether French law would sanction such proceedings I know not; but I sincerely wish it were as legal in this country to destroy forged pictures as it is to burn forged bills.

Another instance occurs to me. Some two or three years ago, I received a letter from a person whose name I forget, telling me that he had a picture—naming the size—of the "Coming of Age." From the dimensions I knew it must be a copy, and as I had made one small copy, as nearly as I could remember, about the size named, I thought it likely the one inquired about might be my work. In the letter the writer said he had no doubt of the originality of the picture; and added that the "coloring was as fine as Titian;" but a stupid friend having expressed a doubt, he would be obliged, etc., etc. In my reply I said that if he chose to be at the trouble and expense of sending the picture to London, I would solve his friend's doubts; but if the "coloring was equal to Titian," he might save himself the trouble of submitting it to me, as it most certainly could not be my work. The picture arrived, and I found it to be a vile daub smeared over an engraving from the original, in which the painter had followed his fancy in inventing a scheme of color quite unlike the picture, and still more unlike Titian.

Five-and-twenty years ago the elections at the Royal Academy took place twice a year. Vacancies in the associate list were filled up in November, academicians were elected in February; and it was further enacted that the death of an R.A. must have taken place three clear months before the 10th of February, or, in default, the vacancy could not be filled till February in the following year. Turner lingered for two or three weeks into the prescribed three months. I had to wait, therefore, nearly fifteen months for my promotion; thus serving, as Jacob did for Rachel, seven years for my hardly-earned honor. I am glad to say that the Academy "has changed all that," as well as other fossilized rules as much requiring abolishment. A newly-elected R.A. finds himself also elected into offices for the duties of which he may, or may not, be competent. He becomes a teacher in the Life and Painting schools ; he is at once placed upon the council, and finds himself a member of the dreaded hanging committee. It is well known that some of our best painters are the worst teachers. Landseer used to say, "There is nothing to teach." I heard one of the most eminent academicians says—in answer to reproaches for his neglect in not attending at the Painting School — "What would be the good ? I don't know anything ; and if I did I couldn't communicate it." Maclise said to me, when as a student I was copying a picture by Reynolds, "I can't teach you anything. I am here to take a lesson myself."

It certainly appears to me that the system of what is called teaching by visitors is altogether wrong; as, from the varied and often contradictory character of the advice tendered, the student finds himself in a condition of helpless bewilderment.

In the days of which I am writing, the hanging committee was composed of three men, whose duties consisted in cramming into the small rooms in Trafalgar Square as many pictures as they would hold, totally, indeed necessarily, regardless whether any of them could be seen without telescopes or not. The amiable feeling that exists between Scotchmen, whether they are strangers to each other or not, is pretty universally acknowledged; but should there be a sceptic on the subject, a glance at the Academy walls when a Scotchman happens to be one of the hangers will dispel his doubts, unless, as happened in one memorable instance, the brotherly feeling is indulged to such a degree as to be an injury to those who were not so fortunate as to have been born north of the Tweed. David Roberts, a thoroughly kind-hearted Scotchman, being newly elected, was placed on the hanging committee—his brother hangmen being Mulready and Abraham Cooper. The arrangement of the pictures had proceeded harmoniously enough, the Englishmen only finding it necessary now and then to moderate the enthusiasm of their fellow-hangman in favor of some work that had little to recommend it beyond the fact that it was done by Mac Somebody, when luncheon-time arrived. Roberts was not hungry, could not eat luncheon. Mulready and Cooper must have been exceptionally so, for they were an unusually long time away from the rooms. In the interval, Roberts, with the assistance of the carpenters, had emulated the busy bee, the result being a goodly array of Scottish pictures in all the best places.

"Good gracious, Roberts!" said Cooper. "Why, you have turned this room into Scotland Yard."

Mulready beckoned to the carpenters, and said:

"Take all these pictures down again."

Roberts remonstrated.

Said Mulready: "Friendship is noble; but when it is indulged to the injury of others, all the nobility goes to the winds. Take them every one down."

"Then," said Roberts, "if I am to be treated in this way, and my judgment disputed, I may as well go home."

"Much better," was the reply, and home Roberts went.

The two men were members of the Academy for more than thirty years after this little dispute, and I grieve to say they never spoke to each other again. Exceptions prove the rule, for I hereby declare that quarrels among us are almost unknown. Differences of opinion exist, as in all communities; but serious quarrels, never. Stay—there is one more remarkable exception. About five-and-forty years ago, there lived an academician whose son was also an artist, but of moderate ability. He was a constant exhibitor, and, in the estimation of his father, well worthy of the rank of associate. Fortunately that opinion was only shared by a few intimate friends of the R.A., who at election-time never mustered in sufficient strength to enable them to perpetrate a wrong. Among the intimates of the veteran academician was one who, I believe, never permitted any feeling but the conviction of desert to influence his vote. On the eve of an election, sumptuous dinners were given in —— Place, at which the candid friend always assisted. After a final defeat — for the young man died soon after—the man I call the candid one paid a visit to the old R.A. He was received with great coldness; and almost immediately the momentous question was put:

"Did you vote for my son, sir, last Tuesday night?"

"That," said the candid friend, "is a question no one has the right to ask."

"There is the door, sir, and I beg you will never darken it again."

Many years afterwards the veteran academician, though scarcely able to walk, was determined to see the new gallery at Burlington House on the occasion of our first occupation in 1869. I was talking to the candid friend as the old man was supported to a seat in the large gallery during the private view.

"Why, there is old ——!" said I. "If you ever intend to be friends with him again — judging from his appearance—you haven't much time to lose."

"Poor old boy!" said Mr. Candid; "I have a great mind to go and speak to him."

"Do," said I; "he will be pleased."

I watched the interview — it was short. When his old friend spoke to the ancient R.A. he started and looked up, muttered something, then his head sank on his breast, after the manner of the aged.

"Well," said I, when the candid one rejoined me, "what did he say?"

"He looked me straight in the face, and after hearing a pretty speech I made him, he said, 'I don't know you, sir.' By Jove! what a good hater he is! It's nearly twenty years since he showed me the door, because I had done my duty."

It may interest my readers to know of the great care taken by the council of the Academy to prevent any communication respecting the exhibition arrangements to the outside world — notably to would-be exhibitors. New members of council are informed that they must never "breathe a syllable" to a living being about the places of any of the pictures, until the whole of the exhibition is arranged.

"May I not tell a friend that his picture is on the line?" said I, in subdued tones, to one of the council, after Sir Charles Eastlake had solemnly admonished the new councillors, of whom I was one.

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us — no! and don't you see why? Your friend's picture may be on the line one minute, and off it the next. I have known instances of pictures changing places twenty times. No work of an outsider is safe in its place till the varnishing-days; wait till then to tell your friend his fate."

After cautioning the R.A.'s, the servants, carpenters, etc., engaged to place the pictures on the walls, and the sculpture in its "den"—as the Trafalgar Square Sculpture Gallery was called—were sent for; when they stood before us, in what seemed to me great number, the president informed them that the breaking of the silence enjoined upon members and servants alike, by the faintest whisper, would cause the delinquent's instant dismissal.

I am referring to my first experience.

As picture after picture was brought before us by the long line of carpenters, the novelty of the occupation interested and amused me—for the first few hours. Then came a bewildering and weary time; being only human, we were tired—at least I was. But I can truly say I never allowed a picture to pass me without giving it the attention it merited, and sometimes much more. As I have said elsewhere, I have served many times on the council, and on the arranging committee; and I have never known of a charge of dishonesty, in any shape, being substantiated against the "carpenters," who necessarily become acquainted with all the works offered for exhibition, and very likely, in some instances, with their producers. I have often thought that the temptation to the servants to accept bribes from outsiders must be very great. I can imagine—and should scarcely condemn—an "outsider" who might seek out one of the carpenters, and say to him, "Look here, you know my little picture; whenever you see the hangers searching for a picture to fill a place—a good place, you know—keep mine before them; and here is so much for you." Ah, my dear young outsider, we know that little game so well! I discovered it during my first hanging-days. To make the manœuvre clear to my reader, I must ask him to imagine long rows of pictures stacked together in each room, some with their faces exposed, some—most, indeed—showing only their innocent backs. One of the committee was looking for a picture to fill a vacant place, when his attention was attracted to a carpenter who offered a picture with the words, "I think this is about the size, sir." My friend looked at it for an instant, passed his measuring-rod over it, and walked away. I thought little of this incident. The hanging proceeded, and, the walls of the large room being nearly covered, we thought it well to begin upon room No. 2. Our work had not progressed much; the line-side of one portion of the room being filled up to a small space in one corner, when, as if by magic, the carpenter's *protégé* appeared just beneath it, mutely offering itself for acceptance. "Hallo!" said the hangman, "where has this come from? it was in the other room just now. Stop, let me look at it; it's pretty good, isn't it? Not quite up to the place, perhaps. Measure it, Frith. Too big, is it? Here, take this picture away." Failure number two.

Suspicion began to dawn upon me, being, I suppose, of a more suspicious turn than the others, who suspected nothing; not even when the persevering little picture followed us from room to room, and was at last hung to get "rid of it," on the same principle as that which influenced the well-known lady when she married her six-times-rejected lover to get rid of him. I have always prided myself, foolishly, perhaps, on my power of detecting the emotions of the mind in the human face—even when a mask is placed upon it. If the carpenter had a mask, he did not use it, for I watched him when his charge was at last favorably disposed of; and, if I had any doubt about the nature of the interest he took in it, his satisfied expression dispelled it.

Feeling that my evil imagination might have run away with me, and that after all the affair might be one of pure accident, I said nothing; but in after-years, when precisely similar "accidents" took place under my eyes again and again, I could no longer persuade myself that outside influence was not occasionally brought to bear upon our excellent staff of "carpenters."

CHAPTER XIX.

HANGING REMINISCENCES.

WHILE on the subject of my hanging reminiscences, I may further note the loving feeling existing between all of Scottish race. A Mr. Mac——, a Scotch artist of considerable merit, and a fruitless seeker after academic honors, was, it is needless to say, a friend of Wilkie's; of whom it is reported that on one of the hanging-days he, of course being one of the committee, was seen wandering about the rooms carrying a small picture, and vainly endeavoring to fit it into a good place.

"Why, Wilkie," said a brother hangman, "what makes you take so much trouble about that picture of Green's? it's not a partic—"

"Green!" exclaimed Wilkie; "I thought it was Mac——'s," and incontinently left the picture to its fate.

The interest Wilkie took in Mac—— extended to his using all his influence by word and vote at election-time, and as it sometimes happens when the merits of prominent candidates are supposed to be pretty equal, names are mentioned and merits canvassed, in those moments of hesitation Wilkie would always exclaim, "Well, there's Mac——." This recommendation, so frequently repeated, was stopped at last by Mulready's loud exclamation, "D—n Mac——!" Beyond such small, and nearly always unsuccessful, attempts at nepotism, proceedings in respect of the selection and arrangement of the yearly exhibition are carried out with absolute impartiality. Instead of the haste and carelessness with which the council for selection is so often ignorantly charged, the most scrupulous care is taken in the examination of each picture, as it is carried by an assistant past every member of the council. Whether, if the works of all the R.A.'s and A.R.A.'s were submitted to the judgment of the council—as outsiders are—they would all be admitted, is not open to question, for I am a witness to the contrary. When Constable was a member of the selecting council, a small landscape was brought to judgment; it was not received with favor. The first judge said, "That's a poor thing;" the next muttered, "It's very green;" in short, the picture had to stand the fire of animadversion from everybody but Constable, the last remark being, "It's devilish bad—cross it." Constable rose, took a couple of steps in front, turned round, and faced the council.

"That picture," said he, "was painted by me. I had a notion that some of you didn't like my work, and this is a pretty convincing proof. I am very much obliged to you," making a low bow.

"Dear, dear!" said the president to the head-carpenter; "how came that picture among the outsiders? Bring it back; it must be admitted, of course."

"No! it must not!" said Constable; "out it goes!" and, in spite of apology and entreaty, out it went.

This story was told me by Cooper, who witnessed the scene. One more example, in which I played a part. The hanging was over, the whole exhibition arranged, and the members admitted to varnish or touch up their pictures. I was in the Large Room in Trafalgar Square, when I saw an academician evidently searching for a picture, and unable to find it. Thinking, as frequently happens, that he was looking for the work of some outside friend, I said:

"Whose picture are you in search of? as I helped to arrange the exhibition, perhaps I can assist you."

"I am looking for my own," said he.

"What was your subject?"

"'Lear and Cordelia.'"

My heart sank. I had a clear recollection of a washy-looking Cordelia, and a Lear with all the characteristics of a street beggar, that had met its fate at the hands of the council with deserved rapidity, for it "went out like a shot," not a soul having the least idea who its author might be. The unlucky picture was found among the rejected, and the carpenters were warned that another such instance of carelessness would lead to the discharge of the whole of them. I must add that the picture went the way of the unfortunate, and never appeared upon the Academy walls. Very few, indeed, are the examples of painters' powers remaining unshaken by time. If, as Shakespeare says, "time cannot wither (certain things), nor custom stale their infinite variety," the observation will not apply to my profession; and one of the knottiest problems left for academic solution at the present time is that of reconciling prescriptive rights with the interests of art, and the interests of the painters themselves. Everybody knows the story of Gil Blas and the Bishop of Granada. Nature kindly, or unkindly, hides from a man the knowledge of his failing powers. How often do I hear old painters say, on showing a mere "shadow of a shade" of former power: "There, I mean to say I never painted a better picture in my life than that!"

I have no doubt I shall soon be using similar language, and when I do I hope I shall find a friend to act the part of Gil Blas for me, when I promise not to imitate the Bishop of Granada. Few members of the Academy have served as often on the hanging committee as the writer of these lines; and it has happened to me on one or two occasions, on agreement with my brother hangers, to have to represent to the council the necessity of asking a member to withdraw from exhibition a work which we thought unworthy of his fame. In each case the request was *gratefully* agreed to, and the work withdrawn. But on one occasion we had to deal with two specimens of incapacity from the hands of a very old member, whose portraits, ages before, had been justly considered ornaments of the exhibitions. One of these delectable productions was a portrait of a clergyman, the other a picture called "Charity." The divine was not so desperately bad as to necessitate his expulsion, if one peculiarity could in any way be dealt with. He was supposed to be preaching with appropriate earnestness; and his eagerness to convert had affected his eyes in a remarkable manner: they were exactly like those of an owl; the eyeballs were intensely black, with a circle of light bright blue encompassing them round about. We tried him on the wall, but distance lent increased terror to his expression; he glared at us so fearfully that, in regard to the consequences that might arise to unwary visitors, we hastily took him down again.

"Now," said I to a brother hangman, "what is to be done? It is no use asking the old man to withdraw either of these pictures—he won't."

"No," replied my friend; "but I think we might take some of the enthusiasm out of those eyes."

No sooner said than done. A finger was wetted, a little blacking taken from my friend's shoe; the bright blue circle received a glaze of blacking, and the glare of terror-inspiring fury was changed into a softened, appealing expression, as likely, perhaps, to prevail with an obstinate sinner as the more denunciatory form of admonition. With that little change the picture took its place among the rest. The second performance, "Charity," had then to be considered. A figure which, after long examination, we agreed to be intended for a monk, was represented standing—no, falling—against a rickety door—the door of a monastery, if a black object with square patches for windows could be accepted for such a building. The monk's head was enormous; the artist, with the originality of genius, had defied nature to the extent of placing the features in the monstrous face out of their usual positions; one eye had strayed into the forehead; there was no mouth that we could discover—considered useless, perhaps, as the monk may have belonged to a monastic order in which abstinence from food was enjoined; the right hand, holding what was more like a huge muffin than anything else, was attached to an arm longer than that of Rob Roy, who was supposed to be able to garter below the knee without stooping. And the crowd of beggars surrounding the charitable monk! No words of mine could do justice to deformity which Nature in her wildest freaks had never equalled. The three hangmen, with their long measuring-rods, looking like the three witches in "Macbeth," stood staring at the painful example of the incapacity of age, till one broke silence and said: "Blacking is of no use here. What shall we do? Old —— told So-and-so that 'Charity' is the best thing he ever did. He won't withdraw it if the forty of us went down on our knees and prayed to him."

After a pause I said: "If you two will stand by me—as oldest member I shall surely be pitched into—we won't say a word, but just leave 'Charity' out in the cold."

This was agreed to; the picture was returned to him who made it, and we never heard a word of complaint. I think I have said enough to prove that a change in the laws of the Academy is required to enable a properly-constructed tribunal to deal with such cases as I have described; cases which are by no means confined to the productions of the aged members of the body, but—either from carelessness or incompetence, or both—are as often found existing among the younger men; who occasionally display pictures which, had they been subjected to the judgment of the council, would assuredly have been condemned.

CHAPTER XX.

"RAMSGATE SANDS."

My summer holiday of 1851 was spent at Ramsgate. Weary of costume-painting, I had determined to try my hand on modern life, with all its drawbacks of unpicturesque dress. The variety of character on Ramsgate Sands attracted me—all sorts and conditions of men and women were there. Pretty groups of ladies were to be found, reading, idling, working, and unconsciously forming themselves into very paintable compositions. Under date September 4, my diary says, among other entries: "On the sands sketching." "September 10, sketching on sands till one." Each day, up to the 14th, I find occupied in making slight drawings of details, and on the 14th the diary says: "Made pencil-drawing of Ramsgate Sands. I wonder if I shall make anything of it—who knows?" The interpretation of this being that the different groups taken from nature were arranged to form the composition as it appeared afterwards in the completed work. The pencil-drawing was but preliminary to a very careful oil-sketch, in which color, light, and shade, and to some extent character, were determined. So novel was the attempt to deal with modern life, that I felt it to be very necessary to be able to show to those whose advice I valued the clearest possible indication of my new venture. When the oil-study was finished I called in the critics; but before I speak of their divergence of opinion I may give some extracts from my diary describing the progress of the oil-sketch:

"*Sept.* 30.—Began idly to make a sketch from Ramsgate Sands, which, if successful, will considerably alter my practice."

"*Oct.* 2.—An idle sort of day, thinking, and arranging for 'Ramsgate Sands.'"

"*Oct.* 3.—Finished outline of 'Sands,' an extensive business; out early to Great Exhibition."

"*Oct.* 21.—Began to paint in sketch of 'Ramsgate Sands;' did one group."

"*Oct.* 22.—Again at work; did another group."

"*Oct.* 24.—Again at sketch of 'Ramsgate Sands;' progressing with it."

"*Oct.* 25.—Finished group of girls reading, and a man selling toys."

"*Oct.* 28, 29.—'Ramsgate Sands;' worked, but did little good."

"*Nov.* 1.—Worked all day on 'Ramsgate Sands;' fear I am spending more time on it than it is worth."

"*Nov.* 3.—Sketched the widow and her friends."

"*Nov.* 4.—The green lover and over principal group."

"*Nov.* 8.—Sea-shore and figures."

"*Nov.* 11.—All day on background of 'Sands;' fear it will not do. Disagreeable at present."

"*Nov.* 13.—Again on background of 'Sands;' finished it; like it much better."

"*Nov.* 14.—Finished sketch."

"*Nov.* 15.—Ward saw sketch and seemed struck with it."

The importance, real or fancied, of a serious undertaking must be my excuse for inflicting these extracts upon the reader; they may show to the student the necessity for careful preparation before a large composition of figures is attempted. Ward and Egg were the first artists to whom I submitted my sketch. Ward approved, and I find by my diary "that Egg saw 'Ramsgate Sands,' and strongly advised me to paint a large picture from it." Mr. Birt—who may be remembered as the purchaser of the "Gleaner"—bought the sketch subject to its being more finished. The subsequent history of this transaction may serve as another example of the whims of the "patron." Under date of March 13, 1852, I find by my diary that "Webster, R.A., called, and seemed greatly pleased with picture of 'Pope and Lady Mary'" (then on the eve of finish), "and especially with the sketch of 'Ramsgate Sands.' He said he wished I was going to paint the subject for him." On Good Friday, the 9th April, the picture of the "Sands" was begun, and on Friday, the 7th May, the first touch of paint was put upon it. As the picture was eventually very successful, the superstition in respect of Friday may be disposed of in this instance. Most critics approved of the subject, but there were several non-contents. One man, an artist, said it was "like Greenwich fair without the fun;" another, that it was "a piece of vulgar Cockney business unworthy of being represented even in an illustrated paper." My non-artist friends were one and all against it; one said, "The interest, which he could not discover, could only be local;" and an academician, on hearing of it, said to a friend of mine, "Doing the people disporting on the sands at Ramsgate, is he? Well, thank goodness, I didn't vote for him! I never could see much in his pictures; but I didn't think he would descend to such a Cockney business as that you describe. This comes of electing these young fellows too hastily."

With certain interruptions by portraits and small pictures, the "Sands" went steadily on. The summer of 1852 found me again at Ramsgate, mainly for the purpose of painting the background, which I wished to make locally accurate. Photography was in its infancy at that time; I had therefore to rely on my own drawings of houses, cliffs, and bathing-machines; for though photography, or, as it was then called, *Talbotyping*, was tried, the result was useless. The sea troubled me greatly, as the following extract shows:

"*Sept.* 6.—At work at the sea, and perfectly at sea I found myself; for I could no more paint it than I could fly to the moon."

Then came doubts thus expressed:

"*Sept.* 11.—Clock tower, obelisk, and hotel. Will all this repay me in any way? I doubt it!"

"*Sept.* 27.—Leech called and said picture would be 'a great hit.' Who can tell?"

By the end of the month I was back in London, and at work pretty constantly on the picture on which I felt so much to depend. It was towards the close of the year that I became convinced that much more time was required for finishing properly than that at my disposal before the Exhibition of 1853. I may close the year with another extract from my diary:

"*Dec.* 31.—Skirt of pink girl; worked slowly. To a dance at Charles Dickens'. Talfourd proposed Dickens' health; a merry party. Left them dancing at two o'clock; and so ends the year '52."

Though all hope of completing my picture satisfactorily was abandoned, I find I worked as steadily at it as dark weather, the model difficulty, and other hinderances would permit, until my election as an academician in February, 1853. Newly-elected members are expected, indeed compelled, to present a specimen of their work gratuitously to the institution; and any such work must be submitted to the council and approved by them, before the new member can receive his diploma. The result of the regulation may be seen in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House; where, though there are admirable examples of some of the elect, there are others which, being *unsalable,* have been *given* to the Academy. I cannot say that my diploma picture was unsalable, because I found purchasers ready to take it; but I should be sorry to stake anybody's reputation upon it, if it were much better than it is. The origin of the subject may amuse. Being in the habit of keeping my eyes pretty well open as I walked along the streets, they were one day gratified by the sight of an orange-girl of a rare type of rustic beauty. Her smile as she offered her oranges was very bewitching, and had, no doubt, assisted her in creating a taste for oranges on many occasions. I became a large purchaser, and succeeded, after much trouble, in getting her to promise to sit for me, provided I would go to her confessor (she was Irish and a Catholic) and get his consent. A young Catholic friend was staying with me at the time, and he readily consented to intercede with the priest. That gentleman, suspicious of my friend, gave him a very cool reception, and a flat refusal to sanction his application. For some time the girl was obdurate, but at last, as she could not get the priest's permission, she consented to sit without it. I determined to paint a laughing face from her—under the most favorable conditions a most difficult thing to do, but in her case hopeless, unless I could have induced her to go on for two hours selling imaginary oranges to phantom purchasers. I could not find anything to talk about that would amuse her, and she could not talk to me. In one of my attempts at conversation, I asked her if she was not sometimes annoyed by the soldiers and street-loafers that frequented Albany Street, where she usually stood to sell her fruit. Her experience of life was summed up in a few words.

"Yes, sometimes she was bothered; but it was by swells. Gentlemen," she said, "is much greater blackguards than what blackguards is."

After many attempts to rouse an expression that would help me to make a laughing face, I found the worst of hinderances that can afflict a painter come upon me—my model fell fast asleep; and as nothing that I could say or do would keep her awake, I abandoned the laughing subject, and painted "The Sleepy Model," who now sleeps all day long in the Diploma Gallery. By showing a laughing face sketched on the canvas before which a perplexed artist stands, and the model, who ought to assist him in realizing the expression, fast asleep, I thought I should prove in a small way one of the difficulties that beset all artists—to say nothing of the situation, which has its comic side. The picture was not exhibited in the annual show; it was reserved for a more cruel destiny in the Diploma Gallery—that of being always exhibited among many better, and a few worse, than "The Sleepy Model."

The greater part of the year 1853 was devoted to the "Sands" picture, delays taking place at intervals from the difficulty of finding suitable models. I noticed an incident of pretty frequent occurrence, which I determined to introduce into the background of my picture. A couple of men were joint proprietors of a "happy family," consisting of cats and mice, dogs and rabbits, and other creatures whose natural instincts had been extinguished so far as to allow of an appearance of armed neutrality, if not of friendship, to exist among them. When the cat had played with the mice, and had allowed canaries to peck it without resenting the liberty, a hare was made to play upon a tambourine, and during the *finale* the proprietor's friend and assistant on the drum made the usual collection. The drummer wore a wonderful green coat; he was very ugly, but an excellent type of his class. As I made up my mind to introduce the whole of the show, taking the moment of the hare's performance as the chief point, it was necessary to enter into negotiations with the proprietors. I found, as I expected, that they hailed from London; and I also found that they would sit, and the animals should sit, if they were sufficiently well paid for doing so. The chief proprietor's name was Gwillim, and his town residence was 32 Duke Street, Tower Street, Waterloo Road. He came to see me in London, and a day was fixed for the beginning of *my* performance. It was late in December, when our enemies the fogs were upon us, that I was promised my first sitting from Mr. Gwillim. Instead of that gentleman came the following letter:

"*December* 23, 1853.

"SIR,—I ham sorry I Cannot as attend on you to-Day. My limbs is so Bad that I thout I Could not Do you juctice, and It Being so Wet and Fogger I thout it Wol Make no Diference to you

"I Remain you
"MR. GWILLIM.

"At 32 Duke St., Tower St., Warterlew Road."

However, the fogs lifted, and in due time I completed a tolerable resemblance of Mr. Gwillim and his establishment, including the ugly drummer; whose coat became my property, and did duty on many occasions afterwards. Under date of December 30, says my diary:

"Gwillim came at last. Set to work about 12; worked hard and painted him and the hare, having the birds arranged for to-morrow."

"*Dec.* 31.—A good day at birds, cages, etc.; finished them pretty well. Paid the man 30*s.*, and bade him adieu."

Though I was fortunate enough to be overwhelmed with commissions for small pictures, nearly all my larger pictures were speculations as regarded purchasers; but up to the "Ramsgate Sands" time, I had had little difficulty in disposing of works that, from their size, and the time occupied in completing them, were necessarily expensive. It was my habit to leave a large loophole for the escape of a purchaser, in the event of any objection arising in his mind in respect of the way his commission may have been executed. I found a few repudiations on grounds to which I could not object. About the time of the beginning of the "Sands," some collectors found me out, to whom, according to their own showing, price was of no consequence. One, I believe a very rich one from the north, to whom I showed the Ramsgate sketch, asked the price, the size of the intended work, etc. The price I could not name till after the completion of the picture; the size was satisfactory. The collector said he was "perfectly delighted" with the subject as treated by me, and he left me after extracting a promise that I would give him the first refusal of the picture. The gentleman in question, a perfect stranger to me, happened to be a friend of an acquaintance of mine, an artist, to whom I confided the fact of Mr. S—— being, in all probability, the happy possessor of my picture, then on the verge of completion.

"I think you are making a mistake," was the reply. "Mr. S—— was here the other day. He told me he had seen your sketch of 'Ramsgate Sands,' and (you won't mind my telling you, will you?) he said he wondered how anybody in his senses could waste his time in painting such a tissue of vulgarity, and that he wouldn't have such a thing on his walls."

This was what would be called in prize-ring language "a facer," and quite sufficient to convince me that my promise to give Mr. S—— the "first refusal" was unnecessary. The picture was refused by five other "patrons," upon one excuse or another. One gentleman, finding himself *cornered* (P.R. again), said the picture wanted *something.* Frank Stone, who stood by and heard this brilliant objection, turned to the collector and said: "What do you say to a balloon, sir?" pointing to the sky. "Would *something* of that kind finish the picture?"

After half a dozen rejections, I refused to listen to the advice of my friends to "avoid picture-dealers," and the picture was bought at the price of a thousand guineas by

Messrs. Lloyd; who had no cause to repent of their bargain, as I shall afterwards prove. While the larger picture was progressing slowly towards completion, I painted several small works, the ready sale of which enabled me to keep the ship—now laden with several small passengers—well before the wind. Among the best was a scene from "Woodstock," which—with three other subjects from Scott—was very beautifully engraved by Stocks for a new edition of the Waverley Novels. In the progress of the "Sands," I benefited greatly by the advice of some of my brother artists. About six weeks before "sending-in day" I begged for a criticism from Mulready, the greatest of them all; and never shall I forget the visit. My diary says:

"*Feb.* 20.—Mulready came early, and looked over the picture. He complained chiefly of the color and effect—too many gray tones used—more positive tints should have been chosen for some of the foreground figures; the light and shade not sufficiently massed, too much cut up into small pieces of sharp dark and light—all my old faults. Worked a little in bad spirits."

Bad spirits, indeed. The severity of the remarks was awful; so severe that the old man, conscious of his strong language, looking towards a curtain that covered the studio door, said, "I hope no one can hear what I am saying."

When he left me, I remember saying to myself, "If all that is true, I have made a dismal failure." Unable to work, I went to Egg and implored him to tell me if there was hope in my work or not. He returned with me, and cheered me a good deal. He said, "You must remember that Mulready had come from his own brilliantly-colored picture—his eye accustomed to strong colors—to yours, in which bright reds and greens could not be used."

That might account for much that Mulready said; but to this day I cannot understand the sweeping condemnation that he passed upon every quality in the picture. He could see no character, no beauty in the women, no nature or truth anywhere. I knew him to be a severe, but not an ill-natured critic; and the idea of jealousy was too absurd to be entertained for a moment. And that he was absolutely wrong the after-success of the picture abundantly proved. Show-Sunday came, and numbers of people with it. Under date of April 3, I find:

"Many visitors. On the whole feel the picture is thought successful; cannot tell—it may be the reverse."

This was my first year as councillor and hangman. As a very young member, I was not allowed to interfere with the two older men, who had gone through the arranging of the exhibition several times before. If I proposed a picture for a good position, they were two to one against me; still, in some few instances, I was permitted to have an opinion, and to act upon it. Of course I took care that "Ramsgate Sands" had a good place; and when I hung it, I remember well the relief I felt, that though not a word was said about the merit of the picture, its situation was not objected to. The secretary said: "You have given yourself a first-rate place; now take care what pictures you hang all round your own, or you will kill it to a certainty."

The next entry in my diary says:

"*April* 22.—Finished my first hanging. It is a painful and most disagreeable business—so many interests to consider. Tried to do my duty, though perhaps with too much thought for my friends."

Regard for the interest of my friends reminds me of a young student whom I was very desirous to serve. He had sent his first work to the Academy—a scene from Sheridan Knowles' play of "The Hunchback"—a small picture containing two figures. Cooper and Webster were my fellow-hangers, and, on my calling their attention to my friend's work, Cooper used language about it which I cannot repeat. Webster smiled, and asked me if I should like the "place of honor" for it. From the remarks and manner of those gentlemen I gave up the idea of a good place; but as my young friend had told me that so long as his picture was hung he did not mind if it were hung upside down at the top of the room, I still had hope that I could smuggle it in somewhere in an inferior situation; so when Webster said, "Go to the Architecture Room, and try your hand there," I went off with a load of pictures, and "The Hunchback" among them. Under my orders one side of the room was pretty well furnished; my friend's picture in a high corner where I trusted it might escape the eyes of my companions. When Cooper made his appearance with "Well, how are you getting on?" "Oh, pretty well," replied I. I saw the old hangman take a rapid glance at the result of my labors, and as rapidly disappear, to return almost immediately with Webster. Neither of them spoke. Cooper pointed with his measuring-rod at "The Hunchback" in the corner, and then turned to me and said, "It won't do; if it is to be hung anywhere, try it outside in the square. Put it on the line on the Nelson Column; more people will see it there than they will here." With every desire to serve my friend, the fates—Cooper and Webster—were against me, and "The Hunchback" retired forever; so did the author of his being, for he left an ungrateful profession, and now supplies costumes for painting, with a greater profit to himself and everybody else than he could have achieved by the practice of the fine arts. I felt much disappointed that none of the council had a word of praise for my picture. The thing was a novelty. I saw them look, but not a word of any kind fell from them by which I could judge of their opinions. But when the rest of the members were admitted a change seemed to take place; several of the most eminent were loud in expressions of approval; some of the tongues of the councillors were loosened, and I felt assurance of success to be "doubly sure."

Another quotation from my diary, for which I must apologize, and promise to quote it as seldom as possible in future:

"*April* 28.—Drove to R.A. at a quarter to twelve; the royal family came. Eastlake presented me to the queen. She was delighted with 'Seaside.' Wanted to buy it—found she couldn't, and gave me a commission for a similar subject. Everybody likes it. I find myself and Maclise the guns this year."

Maclise's contribution was the "Marriage of Strongbow," one of his finest works, now in the National Gallery at Dublin. I retired from the presence of royalty as soon as I could do so with propriety; but not before I had experienced the truth of what I had often heard, namely, that the prince consort and the queen knew quite as much about art as most painters; and that their treatment of artists displayed a gracious kindness delightful to experience.

Sir C. Eastlake, whose duty it was to attend the royal party through the entire exhibition, left them, and came to me while I was standing among the rest of the council, to inquire into whose possession the "Life at the Seaside" —as it was called in the catalogue—had fallen. "Bought by a picture-dealer," said I, "who for a profit would sell it to her majesty or anybody else." Eastlake returned to the royalties and conveyed my intelligence evidently, for I could see a slight shrug of the royal shoulders, which said quite plainly, "Picture-dealer! Outrageous profit, of course." A few days solved the question, for Messrs. Lloyd, hearing of the queen's desire for the picture, opened up communication through the usual channel; the result being the acquisition of the picture by the queen for the price Lloyds had paid for it; their profit accruing from the loan of it for three years for the purpose of engraving. That part of the business was most admirably effected by Mr. Sharp, the well-known line engraver; and if report spoke truth and the Art Union of London paid £3000 for the plate, Messrs. Lloyd must have received a satisfactory profit on this, as on many other occasions. I should be sorry, indeed, if anything I say of these gentlemen could be interpreted into an insinuation against them, or their fair and legitimate profits. I had very many dealings with the firm, and invariably found them liberal and just. On one occasion only they allowed strict "business principles" to prevail so far as to damage their own interests. I have already remarked that I should have something to say on the "patron" subject, in the matter of the oil-study for "Life at the Seaside" and Mr. Birt; who I must say, by the way, had behaved to me with much kindness and liberality up to the time of my finishing the sketch for him, when his conduct became perfectly unaccountable. I completed the sketch so successfully that one of the Lloyds, happening to call, saw it, and expressed a great desire to possess it. I told him—judging from previous transactions with Mr. Birt—that there was no chance for him, as I considered the sketch already the property of that gentleman.

"Well," said Lloyd, "there is no certainty with these gentlemen. What is the price?"

"A hundred and fifty guineas," said I.

"Consider it ours if Mr. Birt declines it. Does he know the price?"

"No."

I was putting a few last touches to the little picture when Mr. Birt called to see it, and, sitting behind me, something like the following conversation took place:

"What a beautiful little thing you have made of that, Frith!"

"Glad you like it," said I. "Have I done as much to it as you expected or desired?"

"Well, don't ye see" (a favorite phrase repeated constantly when there was nothing to see), "I've been thinking—er—er—that it is too small, don't y'see. It wouldn't hang with the rest of my pictures satisfactorily—from its size, don't y'see."

I don't know which feeling possessed me most strongly, surprise or anger.

"Too small!" said I. "What on earth do you mean by too small? The thing is not made smaller by the finish put upon it at your suggestion; it is the same size as it was when you bought it."

"There, there; don't get out of temper."

"But I am out of temper. I should not have spent a lot of time on the thing if you hadn't suggested it being more elaborated; and now that it is done, and you say well done, you pretend it is too small. If you wanted an excuse for not taking the sketch, you should have found a better one."

"There you go—why get in a passion? Your pictures are 'bank-notes' (*sic*); plenty of purchasers for such as them—um—er—don't y'see?"

"Oh, as for that," said I, "I know I need not trouble myself; for, as you decline it, the picture is sold already."

"Sold!" very excitedly. "Who has bought it?"

"Lloyds," was the reply.

"At what price?"

"Never mind."

"Oh, come now, I can make it all right. What is the price?"

"A hundred and fifty guineas."

"Then I will take it," and as he spoke I heard the rustling of notes, or perhaps the paper of a check.

"Indeed you won't," said I. "I promised it to Lloyds if you refused it, and Lloyds' it is."

"Nonsense! here is the money, don't y'see!"

"No, I don't see. I only wish I could see that you have acted fairly;" and my patron and I parted on unpleasant terms, soon after forgotten, and on both sides forgiven.

To complete the history of this little sketch, I must return to Messrs. Lloyd, then the proprietors of it. My friend Mr. Miller, owner of "The Witch," and other works of mine, saw the "Sands" sketch, took a great fancy to it, and asked me if I thought Lloyd would forego it in his favor. Mr. Miller was then forming a large collection of the works of dead and living painters, and while largely employing picture-dealers to sell to him, or to purchase for him, the works of departed genius, he greatly preferred buying living men's pictures from the artists who had produced them. I went to Lloyd and told him of Miller's wish in regard to the sketch, and begged him to let me sell it to Mr. M. for the price settled upon between Lloyd and me.

"Oh dear, no," was the reply. "The price is two hundred guineas. *Business is business.* Nobody knows that better than Mr. Miller. If he wants the sketch, he knows where to get it."

"Is business always business?" inquired I. "Are there not occasions when it is worth while to sink the business question? Don't you know that if you were to oblige Mr. Miller in this little matter, he might buy pictures from you, or get you to buy for him at Christie's—that you might make a friend of him, in fact?"

"No," said Lloyd, "that is just what I don't know. As I said before, business is business; and two hundred guineas is the price of 'Ramsgate Sands' the Little."

I conveyed this decision to my friend, who paid the two hundred guineas, telling me at the same time that he thought Lloyd had perhaps lost more than fifty pounds by his business habits; and events proved the truth of my idea of business; for Mr. Miller never bought another picture from Lloyd, or through his instrumentality.

From one cause or another I found I wasted a great deal of time after the exhibition of "Ramsgate Sands." I was abominably idle, or occupied on trumpery subjects unworthy of the trouble taken in reproducing them. I confess with humiliation that I was prevailed upon to paint a companion to the vulgar "Sherry, Sir?" to be called "Did you Ring, Sir?" A modest-looking servant is opening a door and looking at the spectator with an inquiring expression. I don't think the engraving ever sold, and I am quite sure it didn't deserve to sell. What became of the picture, and some others I did at that time, will, I trust, be forever mercifully hidden from me.

Towards the end of 1854 I found myself preparing a sketch of a child's birthday. The scene is laid in a dining-room, where a family is assembled to do honor to a small person who may have attained the mature age of six, and is at the moment an object of attention to the whole party; for the ceremony of health-drinking is taking place. The heroine sits in a high chair, which has been decorated for the occasion with a wreath of flowers, and is somewhat bewildered by her uproarious brothers and sisters, whose wishes for many happy returns of the day are screamed by half a dozen shrill voices. The parent pair preside, of course, assisted by friends; while the grandfather and grandmother look sympathetically on.

I am indebted to the workhouse for some very good elderly models. I am sorry to say that the freedom with which artists were allowed to select sitters from the "asylum of poverty" no longer exists. We are shut out from all the workhouses; and the reason given us is the impossibility of the "inmates," whether male or female, being able to pass the public-house on their homeward route, without leaving there much of their sitting-money in exchange for drink. The grandfather in "The Birthday" was a man who had seen better days, and found refuge in the workhouse for his old age. He was an amusing old fellow, brimming over with wise saws and good advice. He warned me against extravagance—not that he had been guilty of it, oh, no! "For," said he, "if I hadn't been a very careful man, I should have been in the workhouse long before I was."

The masters of the workhouses that I visited had always been willing to assist in allowing me to select models from the great variety of characteristic faces abounding in their establishments, till the old ladies and gentlemen proved beyond all doubt, by their frequent habit of returning both drunk and abusive, that the indulgence must be stopped.

While the picture of "The Birthday" was proceeding, I occupied myself with many less important works. Among the best were a study called "Lovers," and "The Opera Box." In reference to the latter, I find in my inevitable diary:

"*May* 3.—The queen came to the Academy. Prince Albert asked to be introduced to me, and complimented me on 'The Opera Box.'"

I also painted a public-house sign, or, to speak more correctly, I assisted in doing so; for Egg worked on one side of it, while I attended to the other. The public-house was called "The Pilgrim." On Egg's side of the sign the pilgrim, with cockle-shell and staff, was represented knocking at a door; on the reverse—my side—he was coming out refreshed, and looking up thankfully at a piece of sky, meant to pass for heaven. This work of art was a present to our friend Miller, who had just then purchased an estate in Lancashire, for which he was said to have paid a fabulous sum—as, in addition to many hundreds or thousands of acres, a whole village and the public-house were part of the bargain. We fully expected our pilgrim would have been allowed to take the place always allotted to signs at inns—either above the entrance-door, or in the prouder position on the top of a post, where he might swing and creak after the manner of his kind. But whether from respect for his calling, or for "the artistic merit with which he was invested," he was taken inside and relegated to the bar, where he is more likely to retain his "carnations" than if they were exposed to wind and weather. Many artists have painted signs. Millais once painted a "George and Dragon;" David Cox, "The Oak" at Bettws-y-Coed; and George Harlow (a pupil of Lawrence's, and an admirable but somewhat eccentric painter) left a sign behind him at Epsom, having had the audacity to initial it in one corner with "T. L., Greek Street," where Lawrence lived. The story goes that Harlow and Sir T. Lawrence had quarrelled and parted in anger; the younger painter thinking himself the aggrieved party. As a piece of revenge, he painted the sign, and not only put Lawrence's initials and address on it, but executed it exactly after the manner of that artist. By this he is said to have settled his bill; and he certainly annoyed his late master, who, on meeting the wicked sign-painter in Portland Place, accosted him with,

"Sir, if this were not a long street, I would have kicked you from one end of it to the other."

"Would you?" said Harlow. "Then I am glad it is a long street."

I think it was at this time that I first saw Dickens as an actor. He played the principal character in a piece called "The Frozen Deep," written by my old friend Wilkie Collins, in a theatre erected in the garden of Tavistock House. I append a bill of the play on the following page.

Carlyle says Dickens' "real *forte* was acting, not writing." Carlyle has said many wise things, and, as he was human, he said some foolish ones; but none, surely, more foolish than that which I quote. I saw Dickens in all the characters he attempted, and I heard him read most of his works; and no one who has had a similar experience could be blind to the dramatic power with which he realized ev-

TAVISTOCK HOUSE THEATRE.

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

On Thursday, January 8*th*, 1857, AT A QUARTER BEFORE 8 O'CLOCK, *will be presented*

AN ENTIRELY NEW

ROMANTIC DRAMA, IN THREE ACTS, BY MR. WILKIE COLLINS,

CALLED

THE FROZEN DEEP.

The Machinery and Properties, by MR. IRELAND, *of the Theatre Royal, Adelphi. The Dresses by* MESSRS. NATHAN *of Titchbourne Street, Haymarket. Perruquier,* MR. WILSON, *of the Strand.*

THE PROLOGUE WILL BE DELIVERED BY MR. JOHN FORSTER.

CAPTAIN EBSWORTH, *of The Sea Mew*	MR. EDWARD PIGOTT.
CAPTAIN HELDING, *of The Wanderer*	MR. ALFRED DICKENS.
LIEUTENANT CRAYFORD	MR. MARK LEMON.
FRANK ALDERSLEY	MR. WILKIE COLLINS.
RICHARD WARDOUR	MR. CHARLES DICKENS.
LIEUTENANT STEVENTON	MR. YOUNG CHARLES.
JOHN WANT, *Ship's Cook*	MR. AUGUSTUS EGG, A.R.A.
BATESON } *Two of The Sea Mew's People*	MR. EDWARD HOGARTH.
DARKER } *Two of The Sea Mew's People*	MR. FREDERICK EVANS.

(OFFICERS AND CREWS OF THE SEA MEW AND WANDERER.)

MRS. STEVENTON	MISS HELEN.
ROSE EBSWORTH	MISS KATE.
LUCY CRAYFORD	MISS HOGARTH.
CLARA BURNHAM	MISS MARY.
NURSE ESTHER	MRS. WILLS.
MAID	MISS MARTHA.

THE SCENERY AND SCENIC EFFECTS OF THE FIRST ACT, BY MR. TELBIN.

THE SCENERY & SCENIC EFFECTS OF THE SECOND & THIRD ACTS, By Mr. Stanfield, R.A.

ASSISTED BY MR. DANSON.

THE ACT-DROP, ALSO BY Mr. Stanfield, R.A.

AT THE END OF THE PLAY, HALF-AN-HOUR FOR REFRESHMENT.

To Conclude with the Farce, in Two Acts, by Mr. BUCKSTONE, called

UNCLE JOHN.

UNCLE JOHN	MR. CHARLES DICKENS.
NEPHEW HAWK	MR. WILKIE COLLINS.
FRIEND THOMAS	MR. MARK LEMON.
EDWARD EASEL	MR. AUGUSTUS EGG, A.R.A.
ANDREW	MR. YOUNG CHARLES.
NIECE HAWK	MISS HOGARTH.
ELIZA	MISS KATE.
MRS. COMFORT	MISS MARY.

Musical Composer and Conductor of the Orchestra — Mr. FRANCESCO BERGER, who will preside at the Piano.

CARRIAGES MAY BE ORDERED AT HALF-PAST ELEVEN.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

ery character, either created by himself or others. That, with training and experience, he would have been a great actor, there is no doubt. He would have been great in whatever career he might have pursued; but as a great actor stands to a great writer in about the same relation that a great engraver stands to a great painter, I submit that Carlyle was mistaken, unless he meant to imply that Dickens was not a great writer; in that case, like most of my fellow-creatures, I am at issue with him.

CHAPTER XXI.

"THE DERBY DAY."

As I have said earlier in these reminiscences, the shock that the first sight of a picture in the exhibition causes to its author can with difficulty be imagined by artists even, who have not experienced the sensation; the influence of the surrounding works, the glare of frames, and the unaccustomed light, all combine to produce so complete a transformation as to create doubts that the black, dirty, inky thing that affronts you can be the clear, bright, effective production that was so admired by your friends and yourself before it left your painting-room. Wilkie felt the full force of this, for, in speaking of his splendid "Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Gazette Announcing the Battle of Waterloo," he says: "This is the only instance of one of my pictures which has not suffered terribly by the exhibition." My "Birthday" was a very painful example of the effect produced by its surroundings; being hung in a well-known and dreaded dark part of the large room, and being a low-toned picture, the consequences were dreadful. I can never forget the shock of the first sight of it. Some one endeavored to console me by saying that if a fine picture by an old master were hung in a modern exhibition it would be destroyed. I was, and am still, inclined to agree with my friend, but I could find no consolation in the reflection; and I very soon discovered that my new effort was considered a great falling off from "Ramsgate Sands," some kind critics going so far as to say I was "done for;" the decline had begun, speedily to terminate in a series of performances disgraceful to myself and the body which had elected me so prematurely. For a time I was crushed, but a reaction soon took place. Though the subject of "The Birthday" offered no opportunity for the display of character and variety of incident that distinguished the "Sands," the execution of the picture was not inferior to its predecessor; and I felt sure that, if I could find a theme capable of affording me the opportunity of showing an appreciation of the infinite variety of every-day life, I had confidence enough in my power of dealing with it successfully; but the subject—then, as now and ever, the chief difficulty—where was I to find a scene of such interest and importance as to warrant my spending months, perhaps a year or two, in representing it? Until the year of which I write—1854—I had never seen any of the great horse-races for which England is so famous, and my first experience of the modern Olympian games was at Hampton; when the idea occurred to me that, if some of the salient points of the great gathering could be grouped together, an effective picture might be the result. Mentioning this to a friend with whom I was walking about the course, he—or, rather, she, for my friend was a lady—declared her belief that it was impossible to represent such an enormous crowd on canvas at all, without producing confusion worse confounded. As we were walking along the course we met with an incident which, though impossible to be reproduced in a picture, may be related here. My eyes were wide open, and my attention alive to everything surrounding me ; and while watching a group of gypsies, who were eating some of the remains of a Fortnum and Mason pie (that had been given them) near one of the booths, I happened to look into the booth itself. It was evidently one of the cheap dining-places so common on race-courses; for a long table, covered with a white cloth, with plates at intervals, stretched from the course into the inner recess at the back. There were no diners, but a solitary man sat at the end of the table, within a few feet of me, leaning his head upon his hand, seemingly in deep reflection. As I looked he suddenly raised his head, seized one of the dinner-knives from the table, and made a furious attempt to cut his throat. The knife was, fortunately, as blunt as those instruments usually are in better regulated dining-rooms than the booth at Hampton, and though the man injured himself considerably, judging from the ghastly pallor of his face and the awful evidence on his beringed hands, I did not believe his attempt was fatal, for he was instantly seized, and prevented from repeating the attack. I heard afterwards that he had been a heavy loser; and my informant said, "The fool lost his money, but he won't lose his life; it wouldn't much matter if he did, for he ain't married, and he is an awful rip."

My first visit to Epsom was in the May of 1856—Blink Bonnie's year. My first Derby had no interest for me as a race, but as giving me the opportunity of studying life and character it is ever to be gratefully remembered. Gambling-tents and thimble-rigging, prick in the garter and the three-card trick, had not then been stopped by the police. So convinced was I that I could find the pea under the thimble that I was on the point of backing my guess rather heavily, when I was stopped by Egg, whose interference was resented by a clerical-looking personage, in language much opposed to what would have been anticipated from one of his cloth.

"You," said Egg, addressing the divine, "you are a confederate, you know; my friend is not to be taken in."

"Look here," said the clergyman, "don't you call names, and don't call *me* names, or I shall knock your d—d head off."

"Will you?" said Egg, his courage rising as he saw two policemen approaching. "Then I call the lot of you—the Quaker there, no more a Quaker than I am, and that fellow that thinks he looks like a farmer—you are a parcel of thieves!"

"So they are, sir," said a meek-looking lad who joined us; "they have cleaned me out."

"Now move off; clear out of this!" said the police; and the gang walked away, the clergyman turning and extending his arms in the act of blessing me and Egg.

The acrobats, with every variety of performance, the nigger minstrels, gypsy fortune-telling, to say nothing of carriages filled with pretty women, together with the sporting element, seemed to offer abundant material for the line of art to which I felt obliged—in the absence of higher gifts—to devote myself; and the more I considered the kaleidoscopic aspect of the crowd on Epsom Downs the more firm became my resolve to attempt to reproduce it. As the time for observation was too short to allow of sketching, I endeavored to make such mental notes as should help me in my proposed work. No time was lost on my return home, as I find by my diary that, on May 21, I "began a rough drawing of 'Race-course,'" and on the 24th the "rough drawing" was finished. I cannot say I have ever found a difficulty in composing great numbers of figures into a more or less harmonious whole. I don't think this *gift*, or *knack*, can be acquired. Many artists, with far greater powers than I possess, fail utterly when they attempt compositions of more than three or four figures, while to me the putting together of a small number of objects, either living or dead, presents difficulties occasionally almost insurmountable. I mention this as a warning to students never to attempt large compositions unless they feel they have the "gift" for work of the kind, the true sign being the facility which they feel in its accomplishment. And, granting the facility, too much time can scarcely be spent in making preliminary studies, always from nature, of separate figures and groups. I arranged the general lines of the composition of the "Derby Day" in what I call a rough charcoal drawing, as noted above; and after making numbers of studies from models for all the prominent figures, I went for my usual seaside holiday to Folkestone, and employed much of it very delightfully in preparing a small, careful oil-sketch—with color and effect finally planned—so that when I chose to begin the large picture I found the "course clear" before me.

Mr. Jacob Bell had desired me to paint an important picture for him so soon as I found a subject agreeable to his taste and my own. On seeing the sketch of the "Derby Day" no time was lost in deliberation, for I was commissioned to paint a picture five or six feet long from it, at the price of fifteen hundred pounds; the copyright being reserved to me, and a reasonable time conceded for the loan of the picture for engraving. Many weeks were spent upon the large sketch, and a second one, now in the Bethnal Green Museum, was made, in which I tried a different arrangement of the principal group. It will be evident, then, that if the larger work failed, it would not be for lack of preparation. Before the picture was begun the copyright for the engraving was purchased by Mr. Gambart, who agreed to pay fifteen hundred pounds for it. The greater part of the year 1856, after exhibition of "The Birthday," was taken up by small pictures, some of them of a very pot-boiling character, and none worth noting in this place, or anywhere else. I may, perhaps, except the picture of an old woman accused of witchcraft, exhibited several years before, which I subjected to a treatment that I recommend for adoption under similar circumstances. After seeing the picture at Preston with a "fresh eye," I felt I could greatly improve it, and some changes—with the owner's sanction—I proceeded to effect, at a sacrifice of much time, and greatly to the advantage of the picture.

On the 20th of January my diary says: "First day's work on 'Race-course;' a long journey, but I go to it with a good heart, and, if I live, doubt not a triumphant issue. Sketched in some of the figures in charcoal."

I wrote, February 9: "First day's painting on 'Race-course.' Miss Mortimer sat. Did two heads of carriage-ladies pretty well."

The main incident in the "Derby Day"—that of the acrobat and his hungry little boy—is too well known to need any description from me; as, indeed, are all the various passages of the picture, from the fact of its being prominently before the public in the form of engraving, as well as from its position in the National Gallery. In the Drury Lane pantomime I found the acrobat I wanted, and, after the usual bargaining, he agreed to come with his little son. The young gentleman was possessed with the idea that sitting meant throwing continual somersaults; but that performance, amusing enough, did not advance my picture; and it was with much difficulty that I stopped his going head over heels into casts and draperies, to the confusion of both. The hands of the youth—not very clean to begin with—became so dirty that a visit to my lavatory was suggested. When he returned to us he said : "Oh, father! such a beautiful place ! all mahoginy, and a chany basin to wash in!" One of my children came into the studio with a message : "Mamma says, papa, will the models want luncheon?"

"Mamma—papa!" said the little acrobat, with contempt; "why don't you say father and mother, young un?"

"Don't you be cheeky!" said the parent.

I made a fairly satisfactory beginning; my difficulties greatly increased by the models being unused to their work. The father, indeed, became faint, and a turn in the garden was necessary. I soon saw that it would be impossible to use my acrobats in painting the whole of their figures, so by increased payment I acquired their dresses, which were donned by those to "the manner born." In such a complicated affair as the "Derby Day," models of every kind were wanted. I laid my children and friends largely under contribution, as well as professional models, one of whom, named Bishop, was so peculiar a character as to deserve more lengthened notice. He was a good fellow and a splendid sitter, but a little doubtful in keeping his appointments; he had much trouble in passing a public-house without going into it first, and he sometimes stayed long and forgot his engagements. In the middle of my work he disappeared for six weeks. I found on inquiry that he had suddenly left his lodgings, and his landlady had no idea what had become of him. I had almost given up the hope of seeing him again, when one morning, to my great delight, he put in an appearance, looking like the ghost of his former self.

"Why, Bishop," said I, "where on earth have you been? You are looking very bad; have you been ill?"

"No, sir ; but I haven't had much to eat where I've been—leastways not the sort I like. Skilly don't suit me."

"What's skilly?" said I; "and where have you been to get it?"

"Skilly is what they gives you when you get into quod, and that's where I've been."

"Quod!" said I; "prison? You don't mean to say you have been in prison?"

"Ah! I have though, sir; and I'll tell you how it was. After I left here last time as I was sitting, I goes towards my place, and just there by Palace Gardens I sees a crowd and a row going on, and I never can see nothing like that without just looking to see what it's all about; and there was a man using bad language to Mr. Webster, which I know well, and a nice gentleman he is, and I've often set for him. So I pushes in, and I says, 'Now what is it?' I says; 'what have you got to say to this here gent, which is a friend of mine?' 'I'll say something and do something to you in a minute,' says a fellow; 'don't you interfere!' And if you'll believe me, sir, I thought he was going to hit Mr. Webster; so I gives him one for himself. And he turns to me, and we went at it hammer and tongs; and the police came and interfered, as they always does; and they laid hold of me, and one of 'em says I hit him. 'You've assaulted me in the exercise of my dooty,' he says, 'so I shall run you in.' And run me in he did; but it took more than him to do it, and they locked me up, and next morning I was took before the beak. The policeman swore as I assaulted him in the execution of his dooty. I told him it was a lie, and was giving him a little more of my mind, when the magistrate says, 'Silence, man!' he says. 'Go to prison for *three* weeks.' That made me wild, and I up and says, 'You call yourself a beak?' I says. 'Why, you ain't up to the situation; and I'll tell you what, I'm a artist's model, and I sits for them as draws for *Punch;* and I'll have you took and put in *Punch,* you just see if I don't.' The beak opened his mouth at that. He ain't often spoke to like that, you bet, sir; and after a bit he says, 'Now you will go to prison for *six* weeks;' and that's where I've been, sir."

"And very sorry you must have felt over the skilly for your impertinence to the magistrate," said I.

"Well, yes, I wish I hadn't a said it; but he made me that wild."

Bishop was a favorite model of Edwin Landseer's, who told me the following story of him. It appeared that to the profession of artist's model, Bishop added the business of a pig-dealer. He had tolerably large conveniences for the prosecution of that trade at his "place," in the form of sties, etc.—a favorite pig now and then sharing the kitchen with Mr. and Mrs. Bishop. As the object of the pig-dealer was to fatten his pigs for the market, much pig's food was necessary; and one day, when he was sitting to Landseer and bemoaning the difficulty of getting sufficient "wash" for his pigs, a bright idea seemed to strike him, and he said to the great painter:

"They tell me, sir, as you knows the queen."

"Know the queen? Of course I do. Everybody knows the queen," said Landseer.

"Ah! but," said Bishop, "to speak to, you know, sir, *comfortable.*"

"Well, I have had the honor of speaking to her majesty many times. Why do you ask?"

"Well, sir, you see there must be such lots of pigwash from Buckingham Palace and them sort of places most likely thrown away; and my missus and me thinks that if you was just to tip a word or two to the queen—which is a real kind lady one and all says—she would give her orders, and I could fetch the wash away every week with my barrer."

In the left-hand corner of the picture stands a lady in a riding-habit. To those who remember the beautiful Miss Gilbert, my rendering of that witty, charming creature will not be satisfactory. The face was perforce in shadow, and in profile, thus handicapping me terribly. I venture to think that Landseer's picture was scarcely more likely to satisfy the many admirers of my lovely model. In that work she was represented reclining by the side of a horse, whose vices were supposed to have been charmed away by the mysterious influence of "The Pretty Horse-Breaker," as she was afterwards christened. Miss Gilbert was a most accomplished horsewoman; indeed, she told me that the greater part of her life had been passed in the saddle, and she was never so happy as when galloping for dear life after a pack of hounds. In return for her kindness in sitting for me, I promised her a proof engraving of the picture. This was on the occasion of her last visit, and, in reply to my telling her that she would have to wait at least three years for the print, she said, "Ah! never mind. I shall soon ride the time away."

Poor girl! She lived to receive her engraving; but she had done with time; rapid consumption had seized her, and death came in the prime of her youth and beauty. I had to thank my friend Mr. Tattersall for the introduction to Miss Gilbert, and for other valuable assistance during the progress of my picture. The owner, Mr. Bell, was also very useful to me in procuring models. Few people have a more extensive acquaintance, especially among the female sex, than that possessed by Jacob Bell; and what seemed singular was the remarkable prettiness that distinguished nearly all these pleasant friends. I had but to name the points required, and an example was produced.

"What is it to be this time?" he would say. "Fair or dark, long nose or short nose, Roman or aquiline, tall figure or small? Give your orders."

The order was given, and obeyed in a manner that perfectly astonished me. I owe every female figure in the "Derby Day," except two or three, to the foraging of my employer.

"What kind of person do you want for that young woman with the purse in her hand, listening to that spooney fellow—lover, I suppose?"

"I should like a tall, fair woman. Handsome, of course," I replied.

"All right. I know the very thing. Been to the Olympic lately?"

"No."

"Well, go and see Miss H——. I don't know her. Hear she is charming in all ways. Sure she will sit. You go and see her. I'll manage the rest."

To the theatre I went, and found the lady all that could be desired; and in a few days she made her first appearance in my painting-room. Miss H—— was a very delightful person, and she sat admirably. She was undeniably handsome; but I failed miserably, indeed unaccountably, in my attempts—again and again renewed—to reproduce the charm that was before me. At last I felt that I must either rub out what I had done and seek another model, or let my work go with a very serious blot in the centre of it. I did not hesitate long, for, after a last and futile attempt, I erased the figure; and repainted it from one of my own daughters. I need scarcely say that I waited till Miss H—— had departed before taking a step that I knew would be very annoying to her; and it cost me many pangs before I could persuade myself that it was my duty to inflict any amount of pain upon that lady and myself, rather than allow a serious blemish to disfigure my work. Miss H—— was an excellent actress; but she surpassed herself by the passion she displayed when she saw the "Derby Day" in my room on its completion. We were alone, fortunately perhaps. I felt like a guilty culprit about to be sentenced.

"Why, what is this? Great Heaven! you have rubbed me out! This is the most insul— What does it mean?"

"The truth is, Miss H——, I am truly sorry, but I found—"

"And if I had given place to something better—but to be displaced—to be rubbed out for such a baby-faced chit as that—"

"Well, Miss H——, I couldn't. It's my fault. I tried very hard, as you—"

"And all the people at the theatre knew of my sitting for the thing, and I shall be laughed at."

"Oh! I hope not. I will explain," said I.

"Why didn't you say at first that I was of no use to you, instead of putting me to the trouble of coming here and exposing myself to the sneers of the — oh! it's enough to make one's blood boil!"

It evidently was, and the only way for me was to stand by till the boiling was over; so I betook myself to silence, and I listened to a storm of well-deserved abuse, delivered in a style that would have "brought down the house," if the audience could have appreciated true passion. Miss H—— had every reason for indignation, as I fully acknowledged to her when she became cooler; and eventually I think she must have forgiven me, for she accepted a proof of the engraving as a mark of my contrition. If these lines should meet the eye of my kind but unfortunate sitter, I hope she will believe that to this hour I regret the annoyance I occasioned her. I remember telling the misadventure to Miss Gilbert, and explaining to her the necessity for allowing nothing to interfere with the successful production of a work of art, and closing my observations by an illustration, for I said:

"Now take your own figure there," pointing to the lady in the riding-habit. "If I had failed in it to the extent I did with Miss H——'s, I would have rubbed it out without hesitation."

"Would you?" replied the lady; "then I would without hesitation have put my parasol through your picture, and if Miss H—— had served you right she would have done the same."

My determination to keep the horses as much in the background of my "Derby Day" as possible did not arise from the fact of my not being able to paint them properly, so much as from my desire that the human being should be paramount. Still, it was impossible to avoid the steeds and their riders altogether. There I found my friend Tattersall of great service. He procured an excellent type of the jockey class—a delightful little fellow, who rode a wooden horse in my studio with all the ease of rein and whip that would have distinguished a winner of the Derby. He surprised me by his endurance of a painful attitude—that of raising himself in his stirrups and leaning forward, in the manner of his tribe. This he would do for an hour at a stretch. I find my diary says:

"Bundy" (the name of the jockey) "sat for the last time; finished the two jockeys, and one in the distance in his great-coat; and the little chap and I shook hands. I to work; he to the Marquis of Something at Chantilly."

Before he left me he informed me that he would rather ride the wildest horse that ever lived than mount the wooden one any more. I am indebted to Herring, one of the best painters of the race-horse I have ever known, for great assistance in the very small share the high-mettled racer has in my work. I grieve to say that my little jockey friend was soon after killed by a fall from his horse in France.

My diary for 1857 shows day after day of incessant work, with exceptions of enforced idleness through foggy and dark weather. For some time before that of which I write, I had ceased to paint on Sundays, believing that one day in seven was required for rest. I suppose there never was a more industrious painter, or one who produced a greater quantity of good work, than my old friend Sydney Cooper, R.A., whom I once heard say in reply to an inquiry as to whether he painted on Sundays:

"No. If I can't get my living in six days, I shouldn't manage it in seven."

And putting aside graver reasons for not pursuing the habit, I would advise all students to set apart one day in seven for rest. I attribute my long-continued good health to my perseverance in the practice that I recommend.

After fifteen months' incessant labor the "Derby Day" was finished and sent to the Exhibition of 1858. It is difficult to put one's finger on the precise spot where confidence merges into conceit. I acknowledge any amount of conviction that I was doing an out-of-the-way thing, as the letters that I am about to quote will prove; but I deny the conceit, if I should be charged with it. And when such men as Maclise and Landseer used expressions of praise warm enough to have tried stronger heads than mine, I felt my confidence in the success of my work was fully justified. As an instance of generous appreciation I append a note from Maclise:

"14 RUSSELL PLACE, FITZROY SQUARE,
"*March* 25, 1858.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—It will give me great pleasure to join you at the dinner hour on Monday.

"I imagine you still very busy at your work" ("Derby Day"), "but only dropping in here and there little gemlike bits into the beautiful mosaic you have so skilfully put together.

"Believe me, faithfully yours, DANL. MACLISE."

The following is an extract from a letter to my sister, with whom, since my mother's death, I have kept up a constant correspondence. Under date March 6, I find this mixture of jest and earnest:

> "We shall be delighted to see you at any time that you choose to honor us with a visit; and if you wish to see the famous picture at all, you must see it in my own place, for you won't be able to get near it in the exhibition. Some people go so far as to say 'It is the picture of the age,' and no mean judges are they. However, the die is cast, and though I shall work incessantly up to the last moment, nothing that I can do now will make or mar my work; and if it is not pre-eminently successful, thus lifting my reputation into the seventh heaven, I shall burn my books, and fling my wand into fathomless ocean."

Again, under date May 9, when the picture was on the walls in Trafalgar Square, I wrote:

> "When the queen came into the large room, instead of, as she invariably did, looking at the pictures in their order according to the catalogue, she went at once to mine; and after a little while sent for me and complimented me in the highest and kindest manner. She said it 'was a wonderful work,' and much more that modesty prevents my repeating. Now if I were of a conceited turn, I might be in danger; but though I plead guilty to a good deal of confidence, I am not guilty of conceit, at any rate in my secret soul; for I have the meanest opinion of my own powers compared with those 'glorious old lamps' that have survived criticism, and, as Sass used to say, 'received the approbation of ages.'"

It was on this occasion that the prince consort surprised me exceedingly by his intimate knowledge of what I may call *the conduct* of a picture. He told me why I had done certain things, and how, if a certain change had been made, my object would have been assisted. How the masses of light and shade might still be more evenly balanced, and how some parts of the picture might receive still more completion. I put many of the prince's suggestions to the proof after the close of the exhibition, and I improved my picture in every instance. There were several little princes and princesses in the royal party; and I remember one little boy saying, the moment he looked at the picture:

"Oh, mamma, I never saw so many people together before!"

"Nonsense!" said the queen. "You have often seen many more."

"But not in a picture, mamma."

Again the inevitable diary says:

"*May* 2.—Private view. All the people crowd about the 'Derby Day.'"

"*May* 3.—Opening day of the exhibition. Never was such a crowd seen round a picture. The secretary obliged to get a policeman to keep the people off. He is to be there from eight in the morning. Bell applies to the council for a rail, which will not be granted."

Since the foundation of the Academy, in 1768, it had only once been found necessary to protect a popular picture from possible injury by the presence of too eager spectators, and that occurred in 1822, when Wilkie exhibited his famous picture of "The Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo." Readers of Wilkie's life may remember his extreme difficulty in persuading the R.A. authorities to afford him the protection his work so much needed; they were naturally reluctant to mark a particular work with such an invidious proof of its popularity. Academic nature seems to be the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; for, inferior though my work was in all respects to Wilkie's, it was as much in need of protection, and I found the same difficulty in procuring it, as the following letters will show. Mr. Bell writes:

"*May* 4, 1858.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—I went to the R.A. this afternoon about five. The pressure had to some extent subsided, but there was a policeman still in attendance, and people three or four deep before the picture. Those in front had their faces within three or four inches of the canvas. The nature of the picture requires a close inspection to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it; and from what I have seen, I think it not unlikely that some of the readers will leave their mark upon it, unless means be taken to keep them at a respectful distance. Yours truly,

"JACOB BELL."

Again, on the following day he writes:

"I called at the R.A. this afternoon at four o'clock, as I was passing, and found the people smelling the picture like bloodhounds. In the National Gallery, where I went next to see the new old masters, I found post and rail very suitable for the protection of works of art."

Then came a formal appeal to the president and council:

"GENTLEMEN,—I have just left the Royal Academy, where I found Mr. Frith's picture in great danger of injury from the pressure of the crowd. It has been found necessary to place it under the charge of a policeman, who can with difficulty preserve it from contact with the arms and faces of those in the front rank, who are pressed forward by those behind them. My object in addressing you is to request, as a great favor, that, if the laws of the Royal Academy permit, a rail may be placed before it for the protection of the picture. I have the honor to be, sirs,

"JACOB BELL."

This appeal was successful, and the needed protection supplied, as my diary shows by entry on

"*May* 7.—To the exhibition. Knight tells me a rail is to be put round my picture. Hooray!"

"*May* 8.—Couldn't help going to see the rail, and there it is, sure enough; and loads of people."

Apropos of this, I may insert the following bantering letter to my sister:

"You must really come to town, if it is only to see a rarity in the annals of exhibitions—no less than an iron rail round the 'Derby Day,' an event that has occurred once in ninety years. I mean once before this once, and that was when Wilkie exhibited 'The Chelsea Pensioners,' in 1822. On that occasion, thirteen of the elderly academicians took to their beds in fits of bile and envy; and though a few recovered by steadily refusing medicine, they never were in good health afterwards. This calamity was the cause of a resolution on the part of the academicians, in full conclave, that so invidious a distinction should never, under any circumstances, be made again; and when Messrs. Bell and Gambart, the proprietors of the 'Derby Day' and the copyright thereof, took oath and said they verily believed their property was in danger, the secretary pointed to the towers of Westminster Abbey, just visible through the windows, under which repose the ashes of those distinguished men who fell victims to Wilkie, and then solemnly asked if a similar sacrifice was to be offered to Frith.

"'No,' said that official; 'rather let the picture be scattered to the winds of Trafalgar Square; but be not alarmed, we have had popular works here before. There have been trifles by Landseer and Wilkie against which the public nose has been as severely rubbed as it is likely to be against the "Race-course;" and I assure you, on the part of the president and council, that though a rail was once put round a picture of distinguished merit and popularity, such an "unfair distinction" will never be made again.'

"So spake the secretary; but at last it was found necessary (to be serious, I know not how the matter came about) to risk the lives of the envious old boys, for when I went down to the rooms yesterday, I found my precious work protected by a stout iron railing, against which broke a tide of anxious humanity. The oldest frequenter of exhibitions (like the oldest inhabitant, that you have heard of) says the like of this attraction was never seen; and I must say, also, that in all my experience I never witnessed anything like the conduct of the crowd. The man who takes the money at the doors says the receipts are some hundreds more than usual, but that is owing to the generally attractive character of the exhibition. You know I told you I should win the trick this time, and I have won it, my dear, without the slightest mistake."

On the whole, my brother artists were complimentary, but there were exceptions. One academician of what is called the "high-aim" school, by which is meant a peculiar people who aim high and nearly always miss, and who very much object to those who aim much lower and happen to hit—he said to me, looking at the crowd round my picture:

"That thing of yours is very popular; but I intend to exhibit a work next year that will have a greater crowd about it than that."

"Indeed," said I. "And what is your subject?"

"Well, I have not quite fixed on the title yet; but I think I shall call it 'Monday Morning at Newgate'—the hanging morning, you know. I shall have a man hanging, and the crowd about him. Great variety of character, you know. I wonder you never thought of it."

Another of my academic brethren who had seen the picture in my studio, and had nearly smothered me with praise of it to my face, was heard to deliver his real opinion to a friend in the exhibition, to whom he said, pointing to the evidences of the attractiveness of the picture: "There is no hope for art in this country when the people are so besotted as to crowd round such a thing as that."

It is very unusual to see livery servants in the exhibition. As a rule, their interest in art is not strong enough to induce them to part with the necessary shilling for admission. A friend of mine was startled one day by seeing two grooms, who had either been sent by their master, or of their own motive had evidently come to see the "Derby Day," for they made their way straight to it; and without looking at any other picture they entered the crowd and passed slowly by the picture, eagerly studying it. My friend, curious to hear their comments, followed them closely. Not a word was said till they had thoroughly examined the picture, when one exclaimed to the other: "Call that the Derby? It's d—d hot! Come and have a drink."

I suppose there is scarcely a man in a position that can be called public who has escaped hearing something unpleasant about himself from a critic who is ignorant of the personality of the assailed.

Sir Francis (then Mr.) Grant, the well-known portrait-painter, told me that he found himself sitting next to an old gentleman at a large dinner-party just after the opening of the annual exhibition, when the conversation, to one's sorrow, is sure to bristle with allusions to the exhibits. From his neighbor's first question, Grant discovered his ignorance of the name of his fellow-guest.

"Are you fond of pictures, sir?" said the old gentleman.

"Yes," said Grant; "if they are good ones."

"Then take my advice, and don't throw away a shilling on the exhibition, for you won't find any there."

"Oh! but I have been to the exhibition, and I can't quite agree with you."

"Perhaps you have spent your time better than in studying modern art?" said the old critic. "I have had a long experience of it—indeed, I practise it a little—and I can assure you there is not a good picture in the place. The portraits are detestable; and I really think the Academy should have a separate room entirely for those wretched productions—a kind of 'Chamber of Horrors,' you know, like the wax-works in Baker Street."

"Do you really think so?" said Grant. "They seemed to me rather above the average."

"No, I assure you," was the reply. "I couldn't find a decent thing among them; and as for those portraits by Grant, they seem as if he had painted them with whitewash."

This was said in a loud tone, and Grant observed:

"I think you should be a little more cautious in what you say, for Mr. Grant might be present; in fact he is here—he is sitting next to you."

"Good gracious! But how—what" (looking to a lady on his right)—"are you—eh?"

"Yes," said Grant.

When the "Derby Day" was in the exhibition, I had a somewhat similar experience. I took a lady in to dinner, to whom I was introduced, of course; but she could not have heard my name, for she asked me exactly the same question as the old gentleman had asked Grant, and, as well as I can remember, I made a similar reply. My lady friend then proceeded to enlighten me as to the merits and demerits of many of the more notable pictures in the exhibition; and she showed quite a remarkable knowledge of the good and bad qualities of the various works. She was really a very sincere lover of art; and from my constantly agreeing with nearly all she said, she was under the impression that I was deriving knowledge that would help me at other dinner-tables, besides opening my mind to previously unobserved beauties. After giving me a sort of lecture, she said, suddenly, "By the way, there is a picture which we have not discussed yet. You must have seen it—I mean that representation of a race-course. I hope we shall agree in our estimate of that, as we have in so many instances. Now, to me, what is called the 'Derby Day' is in a very low style of art—it is vulgar. Perhaps you may say such a scene is necessarily vulgar. There I should join issue with you. A refined painter would have elevated the scene, have filled it with life and character; have given grace and beauty even to women who go to Epsom. All these qualities are conspicuous by their absence in Mr. Frith's picture. It is ill-drawn, flat, and poor in the painting of it," etc., etc.

As my critic ran on I felt the sincerest pity for her, for I made up my mind that I must confess myself to be the author of the maligned production; and this I did in a bungling fashion enough, for I said: "I am sorry you don't like it, for I painted it."

Never, never shall I forget that poor lady's distress. I tried to help her, I forget how, but I know I tried. Then she was unfortunate, for she fled from her colors.

"Of course," she stuttered, "I really had no idea—but then, of course, it is a very clever picture; but I confess I don't like the subject."

"No more do I," I declared; "but then you must not quarrel with copper because it is not gold. If I attempted history, or what you call high art, I should make a greater fool of myself than I am generally considered to be."

"Of course you would."

And with this remark our art talk closed. We afterwards became fast friends, and my lady critic became a frequent visitor on Show-Sundays; and though she had no sympathy with my art, being tainted with pre-Raphaelitism, she often showed as much acuteness in her remarks as many a professional critic.

One more example of sincere opinion, and I leave the subject. My friend Egg, R.A., was a constant exhibitor, so long as his delicate health would permit; and one private-view day he was seen leaning on the arm of a friend, when a gentleman — a stranger to Egg — approached the man who was Egg's temporary support, saying:

"I can't agree with you about the exhibition; it seems to me much below the average. And as to your friend Egg's pictures, I think they are beastly."

"That is a very unfortunate remark, for this is Mr. Egg."

"So it is—I am sorry. Well, I will go and look again; I may have been hasty in my judgment."

Presently the gentleman returned, and said:

"Well, Mr. Egg, I need scarcely say that if I had known who you were I should have been reticent in my remarks. I apologize; but I am sorry to say I cannot change my opinion."

I confess I prefer this *finale* to the one adopted by my lady friend.

The attraction of the "Derby Day" continued up to the closing of the exhibition, and after being returned to me and receiving some finishing-touches, it was sent to Paris, where it was admirably engraved by Blanchard. The picture then left this country for its travels abroad, first to the antipodes, then to America, and among other places to Vienna, where it procured me the honor of election to the Austrian Academy. The success of the "Derby Day" confirmed me in my determination to paint the life about me; but then came the terrible difficulty of finding a satisfactory subject. As a stop-gap, I began a small picture of a lady waiting to cross a street, with a little boy crossing-sweeper besieging her in the usual fashion. A model for the lady was easily found, and there was a large field of selection open to me as regarded the boy. I discovered a young gentleman with closely-cropped hair, naked feet, and a wonderful broom—in all respects what I desired, except in regard of honesty; and for a further description of this young person and his unsuccessful attempt to rob me, I must refer my reader to my chapters on "Models." I may note here the impression the youth made upon me at his first sitting. In my diary, under date 17th July, I find:

"A low, dull Irish boy for crossing-sweeper, one degree removed from a pig. Found great difficulty; rubbed in the head and figure."

From long study of "the human face divine," I have acquired—or think I have—a knowledge of the character and disposition that certain features and expressions betray. First of all, the features seem to lend themselves to particular indulgences, which, being cherished, mark many faces indelibly. To illustrate my theory I relate the following facts:

A very eminent artist friend and I were summoned as witnesses to the Old Bailey. It was the first day of session, and the prisoners were what is called arraigned. That proceeding consists in placing ten or a dozen of them in the dock together, while an officer of the court reads over the different charges—leaving his hearers without any clew as to the perpetrator of a special crime. Among the charges was one of a peculiarly dreadful character; and when the prisoners had all left the dock, I said to my friend:

"Have you made up your mind which it was of that set who committed that terrible thing?"

"Yes," said he; "the parson, I think."

"That is the man," said I.

The parson was a gentlemanly-looking young man, rather handsome, but with the trail of the serpent palpable over his animal face. Curiously, he was the first to be placed upon trial; he was defended with admirable skill by one of the most eminent barristers, and acquitted ; but our conviction of his guilt remained unshaken. A year or two after the trial I found myself in the company of a solicitor whose name, if I were to mention it, would be known to most of my readers. Our conversation turned on my favorite theory. "Rubbish," said the solicitor; "there's nothing in it."

Whereupon I proceeded to relate my Old Bailey experience, carefully avoiding any mention of the name of the suspected clergyman. I was listened to attentively, and when I had finished my story, the solicitor said :

"Was the man's name So-and-so ?"

"It was," said I, greatly surprised.

"Ah !" said the lawyer, "the fellow was guilty. We instructed P——, and he knew it. The clergyman is now undergoing five years' penal servitude for a similar offence."

My little crossing-sweeper's face warned me not to leave him alone in my painting-room ; I neglected the warning, with the consequences related elsewhere.

I find I was occupied at this time on a picture intended for an artist friend, whose career was somewhat remarkable. I made the acquaintance of my friend—whom I will call MacIlray, a Scotchman—in Paris, when I was studying in the Louvre, in 1840. I was attracted by his pleasant manners, and by some excellent copying on which he was occupied. Like many of his countrymen he was not overburdened with riches, but he seemed to have a good prospect of creating some by the exercise of his profession. On my return to London I introduced MacIlray to the set of young men with whom I was intimate, and he became a great favorite with all of us. He had scarcely had time to make a mark in the exhibition when a singular piece of good-fortune befell him. He had painted several portraits, and among his sitters was a charming widow who possessed in her own right six thousand a year. They bewitched one another, and immediate marriage was the result. There is no blessing, I suppose, that is quite unalloyed, and the drawback to my friend's perfect bliss was the impossibility of a Scottish laird—with all the duties connected with the position—being able to devote himself to a profession which requires all a man's energies to insure success. But if MacIlray could no longer paint, he could be the cause of painting in others; and this took the kind and graceful form of commissions for pictures to all his friends. The price to be paid for each work was a hundred guineas. We might take what subject we pleased, but each picture must contain a portrait of the artist painted by himself. I think every one, in course of time, executed MacIlray's order; and I hear that the pictures are intended eventually to become the nucleus of a national collection in a Scottish town. I hear also that under careful management the six thousand a year has been transformed into nearly double that amount; and if my old friend—who will easily recognize himself under the pseudonym I have used—should read these lines, I hope he will forgive the introduction of them for the sake of "auld lang syne."

So convinced was I that I should henceforth devote myself entirely to modern-life subjects that I was on the point of getting rid of a rather large collection of costumes of all ages. It was well I did not, for I have found great use for them in these latter days.

My summer holiday of 1858 was spent at Weymouth, where, with work and play, I had what the Yankees call "a good time." I was very fond of shooting in those days, and having many friends in the neighborhood of Weymouth I took my fill of sports of all kinds, including one day's hunting which I shall never forget. In my youth I had been accustomed to riding, and by the advice of my doctor, who thought horse-exercise good for all who could get it, I bought a horse which, if not thoroughbred, had all the exuberance of spirit with which that class of animal is credited. If my work had occupied me till it was too late to ride, or if the weather made that exercise impossible, my horse—or, to speak correctly, my mare—became so excited by the prospect of a canter, as to make the avoidance of the vehicles that crowd Westbourne Grove a matter of difficulty. This and other peculiarities caused our parting eventually, without regret on my side, after several unsuccessful attempts on the part of the mare to break my neck. She accompanied me to Weymouth, and she took me out hunting, regardless of my disinclination for that popular sport, as I shall proceed to show. I went to see the hounds "thrown off," as it is called, which, interpreted, signifies the discovery and immediate pursuit of a fox—the hounds being followed by what is called "the field," meaning just as many of the lookers-on as choose to follow to the death. I had no intention whatever of joining the pursuers, but my mare was of a different disposition. I was in the saddle quietly smoking and talking to a friend, when a terrific noise burst upon us. The yelping of dogs, holloaing of men, horn-blowing, together with the galloping of horses in every direction, nearly maddened me, and quite maddened my mare. Away went my cigar, she reared, she plunged, she flew this way and that, as if doubtful of the proper direction, till, seemingly making up her mind, she tore at a furious pace after a crowd of riders, into whose midst she carried me in spite of all my efforts to stop her; in fact, I lost all control of the creature, and never regained it until the hunting was over, late in the afternoon. Never can I forget the six hours' agony I spent on that wretch's back; and then the advice those red-coated villains kept giving me:

"Keep her head straight, sir! Don't pull her; that will never do."

"Give her her head and let her go; take that fence and ditch, that will take it out of her."

"You shouldn't have come out to hounds on a green horse."

"That gent on the chestnut will come to grief, by ——!"

"You would really be safer inside, sir."

"Get off and lead her."

"Really, sir, you must get out of the way; back her into the cover."

"If that gentleman does not get out of the way I shall ride over him, as sure as the devil's in London!"

These remarks and compliments were made to me by a series of red ruffians when I was in a condition of pallor and perspiration, striving, with every nerve that remained to me, to keep my seat and get out of their confounded way. I vowed most solemnly that if I were permitted to see the high-road again I would never leave it for furze-bushes and turnip-fields, from which my despairing eyes could see no exit but over a hedge; hideous swamps full of concealed holes, difficult enough to ride over on a horse in its right mind by a dare-devil with no family ties—how perilous, then, for a timid man on an infuriated beast, with the conviction staring him in the face that any moment might see his wife and family deprived of their natural protector!

To this hour it is a wonder to me that I didn't break my neck. Often and often during that terrible day I was more off the mare than on her—at one moment thrown forward on to her neck, at another nearly slipping off her tail. I had the courage of despair, for I knew that if I were thrown the hunters would ride over me with pleasure; and if that casualty had befallen me in one of those covers they must have done so, for the rides—as they call passages about as wide as a good front-door—made it almost impossible for two people on horseback to pass each other, and those fellows rode as if they were possessed. The huntsman galloped past me and actually blew his filthy horn into my horse's ears. She tossed up her head and struck me a violent blow on the nose, and so confused me that I thought I must have gone then; one foot was out of the stirrup, and I gave myself up for lost. But the good little cherub that sits somewhere or other had an eye upon me, and I live to tell the tale, and to "make a vow and keep it strong," that I will never again put myself in the position of having to follow the hounds.

CHAPTER XXII.

PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS.

In the fragment of English history left to us by Macaulay, an account may be found of a celebrated highwayman called Claude Duval—a handsome youth who managed to disgrace himself and a good family, of which he was the offshoot, by ruinous dissipation of every kind, ending by "taking to the road" at the head of a formidable gang. The young fellow had been page to the Duke of Richmond, whose fatherly attempts to reclaim him were fruitless. The story goes that on a wild heath, a carriage in which the beautiful Lady Aurora Sydney was travelling was stopped by Duval's gang, the trunks were plundered, and a booty of four hundred pounds secured; but a portion of the plunder was restored, on condition of the lady dancing a *coranto* on the heath with Captain Duval. The dramatic character of the subject attracted me. I thought if I could succeed in retaining the beauty of the lady, combined with the terror that she would feel, I should perform a feat well worthy of achievement. The dresses of the period were very picturesque; the contrast between the robbers, and the lady and her companions, would be very striking ; and the lumbering carriage, with its complement of heavy Flanders horses, might combine to make a satisfactory picture. In the absence of a modern-life inspiration, I proceeded with the preliminary drawings and the oil-sketch for Claude Duval. The time unoccupied by shooting and hunting during my Weymouth holiday was devoted to a careful oil-study. I have often pondered over the varied knowledge that an artist must acquire to enable him to master the difficulties that each fresh subject presents. No doubt human nature is always the same, but manners are forever changing; those of two hundred years ago are quite unlike those of to-day. By reading and thinking the student should endeavor to identify himself with a bygone time. Customs also may be learned from many authorities ; so, with much difficulty, may the dresses be studied in which our ancestors lived and moved. To enable me to struggle successfully with my contemplated subject, this variety of information must be acquired. What is the dance called the "*Coranto*"? For some time I could learn nothing about it; no such dance, or anything like it, exists at the present time. In my trouble I applied to an authority in old-world costumes—Mr. Fairholt—who most kindly supplied me with the description of the dance, accompanied by drawings of the performers; and though engravings of the carriages used in the days of Charles II. were plentiful, it was desirable to find the thing itself, if such a discovery were possible. I have forgotten who it was that told me I might find a carriage nearly, if not quite, as old as the days of the "merry monarch" at Cobham Park, the seat of Lord Darnley, to whom I immediately wrote for permission to make a sketch of it, if the news of his being possessed of such a relic were true. I here quote from a letter written to my sister at the time:

> "Lord Darnley was very civil, and sent me permission. I went, and found the quaintest old thing you can conceive, all begilt and carved, with such great leather straps and buckles, and the queerest seat for the driver and for the footmen behind. To think of the old carriage outliving its occupants so long! How they must have gone to court in it, in their flounces, swords, and ruffles. There it is, and here they are not. Such is life, as Mrs. Gamp hath it."

I painted the "blasted heath" from a study made in Dorsetshire, where I also found the withered tree which plays a prominent part in the composition of the picture. I have elsewhere told the student to go to nature for every detail in his picture ; I cannot repeat the advice too often, that no dependence should be placed on memory while a possibility exists of referring directly to nature. The picture proceeded pretty satisfactorily, and was purchased during its progress by Mr. Flatow, the picture-dealer, at the agreeable price of seventeen hundred pounds—which sum also included the sketch and copyright. The worthy dealer is described elsewhere. Of this picture I may add that it was very soon "placed," to use the common phrase, with a Mr. Grapel, whose passion for it speedily cooled; for he parted from it with advantage to his pocket, I believe—in favor of I know not whom—not long after it became his property.

The year 1859 was mainly devoted to the picture of "Claude Duval," but there were many interruptions from the necessity of my keeping promises respecting small pictures. It was at this time that John Forster called upon me to paint a portrait of his friend Dickens. I need scarcely say with what delight, mixed with fear, I heard of this commission—delight because of my veneration for the author and my love for the man; fear that I might fail, as so many had done already. Forster had hinted his wish to me a year or two before, when Dickens had adopted the mustache—a hirsute appendage of which Forster had a great horror; and with reason as regarded Dickens, for it partly covered, and certainly injured, a very handsome and characteristic mouth. "This is a whim — the fancy will pass. We will wait till the hideous disfigurement is removed," said Forster; but we waited in vain. Indeed, we waited till the beard was allowed to grow upon the chin as well as upon the upper lip; so, fearing that if we waited longer there would be little of the face to be painted, if whiskers were to be added to the rest, the order was given and the portrait begun. As I had heard that portrait-painters had often derived advantage from photography, I asked Dickens to give me a meeting at Mr. Watkins', who was thought one of the best photographers of that day. Apropos of this arrangement came the following from Dickens:

"GADS HILL, *Sunday*, *January* 4, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—I want to stay here a week longer than I proposed to myself, in order that I may have leisure and quiet to consider something I am turning in my mind. I hope, therefore, it will not put you out if I suggest that it would be a great convenience to me to have our appointment with Watkins for Monday week instead of Monday.

"Ever very faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS."

Again, on the 12th, he writes:

"MY DEAR FRITH,—At eleven on Monday morning next the gifted individual whom you will transmit to posterity will be at Watkins'. Table also shall be there, and chair—velvet coat likewise, if the tailor should have sent it home. But the garment is more to be doubted than the man whose signature here follows.

"Faithfully yours always, CHARLES DICKENS."

And on the 19th he says:

"MY DEAR FRITH,—The 'properties' shall be ready, and nothing shall scare the undersigned, whose faith is great.

"Ever faithfully, C. D."

In due course the photograph was taken, but not very successfully; nor did I derive the slightest assistance from it in the prosecution of the portrait. The change in Dickens' appearance that had taken place during the twenty-five years that had elapsed since Maclise had painted him so admirably was very striking. The sallow skin had become florid, the long hair of 1835 had become shorter and darker, and the expression settled into that of one who had reached the topmost rung of a very high ladder, and was perfectly aware of his position. I find the first entry of Dickens' sittings under date

"*Jan.* 21.—Arranged Dickens' portrait till he came at 1.30. He sat delightfully. I drew his head in outline, he talking all the while. The result will be successful."

Then, next day:

"Dickens again. Miss Hogarth and his daughter came with him, and remained two and a half hours. Got in the head in colors. Dickens most pleasant. No wonder people like him."

"*Friday, Jan.* 28.—Dickens came at 12. A good and long sitting. Feel quite assured of success."

Between Maclise's picture and my own, many portraits of Dickens had been taken, most of them—indeed, according to the sitter himself, all of them—absolute failures. I was curious with regard to one which I knew had been begun, but not finished, by an eminent academician; and during one of the sittings to me I inquired the reason of the delay.

"Well, the truth is," said Dickens, "I sat a great many times. At first the picture bore a strong resemblance to Ben Caunt" (a prize-fighter of that day); "then it changed into somebody else; and at last I thought it was time to give it up, for I had sat there and looked at the thing till I felt I was growing like it."

On our conversation turning on the preconceived idea that people always entertain of celebrities in literature or art, to whose personal appearance they are strangers, he said he had had frequent experience of the dismay which seemed to take possession of persons on their first introduction to him. "And they occasionally allow their disappointment to take the form of positive objection. For instance," said he, "Scheffer—who is a big man, I believe, in your line—said, the moment he saw me, 'You are not at all like what I expected to see you; you are like a Dutch skipper.' As for the picture he did of me, I can only say that it is neither like me nor a Dutch skipper."

In my own small way I told him I had had a similar experience, for, on being introduced to a North-country art patron, he said:

"You don't look a bit like an artist. I should have put you down for a well-to-do farmer."

"Yes," rejoined Dickens, "and then they look at you as if it was your fault—and one for which you deserve to be kicked—because you fail to realize their ideal of what you ought to be."

It was at this time that Dickens commenced the public readings of his works, and they became immediately very popular as well as profitable. I availed myself of his offer of tickets of admission to Hanover Square Rooms, and heard him read the trial from "Pickwick," and from some other novel, the name of which I forget. It seems a bold thing for me to say, but I felt very strongly that the author had totally misconceived the true character of one of his own creations. In reading the humorous repartees and quaint sayings of Sam Weller, Dickens lowered his voice to the tones of one who was rather ashamed of what he was saying, and afraid of being reproved for the freedom of his utterances. I failed in being able to reconcile myself to such a rendering of a character that, of all others, seemed to me to call for an exactly opposite treatment. Sam is self-possessed, quick, and never-failing in his illustrations and rejoinders, even to the point of impudence.

When I determined to tell the great author that he had mistaken his own work I knew I should be treading on dangerous ground. But on the occasion of a sitting, when my victim was more than ever good-tempered, I unburdened my mind, giving reasons for my objections. Dickens listened, smiled faintly, and said not a word. A few days after this my friend Elmore asked my opinion of the readings, telling me he was going to hear them, and I frankly warned him that he would be disappointed with the character of Sam Weller. A few days more brought a call from Elmore, who roundly abused me for giving him an utterly false account of the Weller episode.

"Why," he said, "the sayings come from Dickens like pistol-shots; there was no 'sneaking' way of talking, as you described it."

"Can it be possible," thought I, "that this man, who, as it is told of the great Duke of Wellington, never took anybody's opinion but his own, has adopted from my suggestion a rendering of one of the children of his brain diametrically opposed to his own conception of it?"

At the next sitting all was explained, for, on my telling Dickens what Elmore had said, with a twinkle in his eye which those who knew him must so well remember, he replied:

"I altered it a little—made it smarter."

"You can't think how proud I feel," said I, "and surprised, too; for, from my knowledge of you, and from what I have heard from other people, you are about the last man to take advice about anything, least of all about the way of reading your own books."

"On the contrary," was the reply, "whenever I am wrong I am obliged to any one who will tell me of it; but up to the present I have never been wrong."

The portrait had progressed to the time when it was necessary to consider what the background should be, and I thought it best to discard the common curtain and column arrangement, and substitute for these well-worn properties the study in which the writer worked, with whatever accident of surrounding that might present itself. Accordingly I betook myself to Tavistock House, and was installed in a corner of the study from whence I had a view of Dickens as he sat writing under the window, his desk and papers, with a framed address to him — from Birmingham, I think — together with a book-case, etc., making both back and fore ground. The first chapter of the "Tale of Two Cities," or rather a small portion of it, lay on the desk. After what appeared to me a vast deal of trouble on the part of the writer, muttering to himself, walking about the room, pulling his beard, and making dreadful faces, he still seemed to fail to satisfy himself with his work. I think he seldom if ever wrote after two o'clock; never, at least, when I was at Tavistock House. With Dickens' permission I used to read the early sheets of the new novel as they lay upon his desk. On one of the few occasions on which I got to work before him, I saw upon the table a paper parcel with a letter on the top of it. From the shape I guessed that it contained books, as the event proved. Presently Dickens came in, read the letter, and handed it to me, saying:

"Here you are again! This is the kind of thing I am subject to; people send me their books, and, what is more, they require me to read them; and, what is almost as bad, demand my opinion of them. Read that."

I obeyed, and read what appeared to me a very well-written appeal to the great master in the art, of which the writer was a very humble disciple, etc., begging for his perusal of the accompanying work, and his judgment upon it, and so on. The work was "Adam Bede," and the writer's name was George Eliot. Dickens took up one of the volumes, looked into it, and said: "Seems clever —a good style; suppose I must read it."

And read it he did that very day, for the next morning he said:

"That's a very good book, indeed, by George Eliot. But unless I am mistaken, G. Eliot is a woman."

It was about this time that Dickens bought the property at Gads Hill, near Rochester—the reputed locality of the famous Falstaff robbery—upon which his longing youthful eyes had been cast so many years before. My first visit to the new house—where Dickens and his family had gone for Christmas—was paid in December, 1858. The day was wet and dreary, but we passed it agreeably in talk and bagatelle; the players being Wilkie Collins and myself, with Dickens and Gordon—most genial of Scotchmen and Sheriff of Midlothian—for opponents.

When the portrait was finished Gordon came to see it. He walked into my painting-room with his arm in a sling. Gordon had the national love of whiskey, and my first thought was that gout had supervened, and I said as much.

"No," said Gordon; "a bite."

"And what has bitten you?"

"A lion," was the reply.

It appeared that on the occasion of a visit of Wombwell's Menagerie to Edinburgh, Gordon had chaperoned some ladies, and while talking to them he amused himself by rubbing the nose of a sleeping lion. The animal opened his mouth, to yawn, Gordon thought; and in shutting it, somehow or other Gordon's hand was enclosed, and the lion's teeth passed through it. The position was alarming enough, but Gordon's presence of mind was equal to the occasion. With his left hand he continued gently rubbing the still sleeping brute's nose. The lion yawned again, and the sheriff withdrew his hand, but only just in time, for, to use Gordon's own words, "The beast's teeth had passed between the bones of the hand, completely through it, and he had begun in a sleepy way to move his jaws; and in another instant I should have been too late, for, as I removed my hand, he opened his eyes."

Dickens capped this experience with another instance of extraordinary stupidity. Being at the Zoological Gardens, he was startled by cries and shouting at the bears' den. A man was at the lower door of the den—now covered by a strong grating—screaming with pain and terror; he had offered one of the bears a bun, the bun was accepted, and the man's fingers with it. As Dickens hurried towards the man, two keepers arrived at the same moment. The bear held the bun and fingers with an obstinacy quite immovable by the blows showered upon his nose. No time for hot irons, so after a very brief consultation the two strong keepers put their arms round the unfortunate man's waist and tore him away, leaving the bun and the first joints of his fingers in the possession of the bear.

When Dickens was sitting to me, he mentioned the intention of his publishers to issue a library edition of his works, with two steel illustrations to each volume. I begged him to allow me to be one of the illustrators; and I chose "Little Dorrit," from which I painted two small pictures, afterwards admirably engraved by Stocks, I think. The great pleasure that I felt in the anticipation of once more trying my hand in realizing the characters of the author was my sole motive in making this proposal. The pictures found purchasers immediately. Great was my delight, then, when I received the whole of the library edition with "To W. P. Frith, with the regard of the author," pasted into the first volume. Lovers of Dickens will understand with what care these books are treasured. I can only remember one unfavorable criticism of my portrait of Dickens, and that was by a lady who knew him well. She met me in the exhibition, where she saw the likeness for the first time, and she greeted me with, "What has Dickens done to you that you should paint him like that?"

She deigned no explanation, and to this moment I don't know what she meant, except to be disagreeable, and in that she succeeded. However, I was amply compensated by the universal approval of all Dickens' family and friends — Stone, Egg, Leech, Mark Lemon, and Shirley Brooks, etc., etc.—who said, "At last we have the real man;" and best satisfied of all was John Forster. Forster was a gruff man with the kindest heart in the world, as the correspondence printed elsewhere goes far to prove; and I now take leave of him with heartfelt recognition of the generous praise that cheered me during my work, and of the noble liberality with which it was rewarded.

The portrait was admirably engraved by Mr. Barlow, R.A., and is now in the South Kensington Museum.

"Claude Duval" made slow but satisfactory progress. My diary for the last day of the year 1859 tells that I painted "Bit of distance right well. Branch of tree. Painted by gaslight. I am doing the most successful picture of its class that I have ever done—better in art than the 'Derby Day,' but it will not be so popular by a long way."

The prophecy conveyed in the above proved true. So great was the demand for modern art a quarter of a century ago that copies of successful pictures—and sometimes of unsuccessful ones—were in great demand. I found myself included among the popular men to such a degree that scarcely one of my more important works escaped what Scheffer called being "bred from." Large and small *replicas*—to give them a fine name—were made; but in no instance without the consent of the owners of the original pictures. Mr. Price, of Queen Anne Street, possesses an important copy of "Claude Duval;" the original is now in the possession of Mr. Fielden, at Doburgh Castle, Todmorden. The critics were severe upon poor "Claude." I forget the words of their objurgations; but I remember the advice of one of them, which was that I should devote myself to the illustration of the "Newgate Calendar," with some compliments as to the fitness of my art and me for the office.

I think the only popular painter who kept himself free from the vice of copying was Edwin Landseer, with whom I had become intimate at this time. He was the greatest animal painter that ever lived; and his figures occasionally were scarcely inferior to his brutes. From his early youth he had been admitted to the highest society, and no wonder, for in addition to his genius, which was exercised again and again for the "great," either in ornamenting their scrap-books or in the more important form of pictures—for which he was very inadequately paid—he was the most delightful story-teller, and the most charming companion in the world. He also sang delightfully. In speaking, he had caught a little of the drawl affected in high life, and he practised it till it became a second nature. He was, of course, entirely free from envy of others; and conscious of his own shortcomings in his art, as a remark I once heard him make will prove. "If people only knew as much about painting as I do," he said, "they would never buy my pictures."

His rapidity of execution was extraordinary. In the National Gallery there is a picture of two spaniels of what is erroneously called the Charles II. breed (the real dog of that time is of a different form and breed altogether, as may be seen in pictures of the period), the size of life, with appropriate accompaniments, in two days. An empty frame had been sent to the British Institution, where it was hung on the wall, waiting for its tenant—a picture of a lady with dogs—till Landseer felt the impossibility of finishing the picture satisfactorily. Time had passed, till two days only remained before the opening of the exhibition. Something must be done; and in the time named those wonderfully lifelike little dogs were produced.

A still more extraordinary instance may be mentioned. Landseer was staying at Redleaf, the delightful seat of Mr. Wells, who, with all his love for artists, objected to their painting on Sunday. Landseer may have had an equal objection to going to church; anyway, he took advantage of Mr. Wells's absence on that laudable errand to paint a picture of a dog—the size of life—with a rabbit in its mouth. This picture was begun as Mr. Wells started for his mile-and-a-quarter walk to church, and finished just as he returned, the whole time occupied being a little over two hours. On the trunk of a tree in the background is an inscription recording the feat.

The British Gallery was a favorite place of exhibition with Landseer, many of whose less important works were shown there. Among the rest I remember one of a hare attacked by a stoat; the stoat had caught the hare by the throat, and one could almost hear the screams of the poor creature in its hopeless resignation to its fate. I do not know who may be the happy owner of that splendid work, but if he should happen to read these lines and will then look at the back of his picture, he will find a criticism of the picture, which is unique, or nearly so, in the annals of that science. It is to the following effect:

"In Mr. Landseer's picture of a rabbit attacked by a weasel, it appears to us that the rabbit is more like a hare, and the weasel has none of the characteristics of that species of vermin, for it is more like a stoat."

The whole of the hall of Mr. Wells's residence was filled by the hand of Landseer; every variety of game, from the red-deer to the snipe, found its exponent in the great painter. When a pheasant was shot, its attitude was carefully preserved by bits of moss or pebbles, so that it might stiffen in death, and thus become a true model for the painter. When a partridge or a wild-duck fell, similar means were taken to secure results, of which most faithful transcripts filled the hall. Besides possessing pictures by nearly all the best modern painters, Mr. Wells had a very fine collection of old masters; and the gardens attached to the house were as remarkable as the contents of it. As the custodian of both, Mr. Wells was even more difficult of approach by strangers than Mr. Sheepshanks. Living within easy distance of Tunbridge Wells, he found it necessary to arm himself against intruding excursionists, more especially after the railway was made. He told me he was called "Tiger Wells," he was thankful to say, and he should always show his claws to anybody who ventured too near his den. I was witness to one example of the tiger-nature which amused me, and may amuse my readers. A carriage filled with ladies, and attended by some gentlemen on horseback, was driven up to the Redleaf front-door. The chief occupant of the carriage was Lady ——, well known in London society. The gentlemen were all of the upper ten, most of them known only by sight to Mr. Wells. The door was opened by David, Mr. Wells's old servant; he was instructed to utter the usual formula, "Not at home," by Mr. Wells himself, who waited in the hall to see the result.

"Not at home," was announced to Lady —— by an aristocratic horseman.

"Never mind," said the lady. "Shall we see the gardens first, or would you like to take the pictures, and then the flowers?"

Before Lady —— could quite finish her directions Mr.

Wells approached the carriage and said, in a peremptory voice,

"Mr. Wells is not at home, madam!"

"Oh!" said the lady; "dear me! Then I suppose we must go back!"

Mr. Wells made his best bow, and the party departed.

To return to Landseer. Our intimacy had extended to the point of frequent dinner-meetings here and elsewhere. At this house he was always a welcome and honored guest; but he had adopted a habit of keeping other guests waiting. It was usually at least half an hour after everybody else had arrived before he made his appearance. For any man to keep ladies waiting has always seemed to me a detestable practice, and though I had the greatest respect and love for Landseer, I determined to read him a lesson; so after suffering from these practices several times, I resolved never to wait a moment for him again. The consequence of this resolution was, that the next dinner to which he had engaged himself to us was nearly half over when he walked into the dining-room, making profuse apologies for his "unavoidable" want of punctuality. Many and many a time did the delightful *raconteur* dine with us afterwards; he was always the first to arrive, and, with watch in hand, he would attack some tardy visitor—if he knew him well enough—and would say: "Look here, there is no rudeness equal to that of keeping ladies waiting for their dinners."

On one occasion our after-dinner talk turned upon the love of money, and as there were no very elderly people present, we all agreed that avarice was the vice of age; and some one spoke of the great Duke of Wellington, then living, as an example.

"No," said Landseer; "whoever says that knows nothing of the duke. I know him well, and I say he is the very reverse of avaricious."

He then proceeded to give us an instance of his liberality. Landseer painted a picture of the lion-tamer, Van Amburgh; a large work representing the interior of a den of lions and tigers, among whom the man lay in apparent security. The artist was left with a free hand as to price;

and when on the completion of the picture, in reply to the duke's inquiry, Landseer told him the price would be six hundred guineas, the duke wrote out a check for twelve. "I could tell you many more instances of his liberality," said the painter.

The great duke, being human, was no doubt the victim of weaknesses, one of which—a very small one—consisted in the conviction that he could name every picture in the Apsley House collection without reference to the catalogue. So long as the pictures followed in regular sequence, and were named one after another in order, the effort of memory was successful; but if the narrator were called back by the forgetfulness of the visitor to any special picture, he was at fault; and without beginning again with the first picture in the room, he could not give the information asked for.

"I beg your pardon, sir; who did you say that was?" said Landseer to the duke, on the occasion of a visit to Apsley House, at the same time pointing to a half-length portrait of a sour-looking woman in the costume of the time of Elizabeth.

The duke looked up at the picture, muttered something, and left the room.

While the duke was absent, Landseer studied other pictures, and had pretty well forgotten all about the sour-looking lady, when a voice close to his ear exclaimed, "Bloody Mary!"

The only true resemblance of the great duke, in his later years, is in Landseer's picture of the "Visit to Waterloo," where the duke is supposed to be describing to Lady Douro, his son's wife, an incident of the battle. It is the *vera effigies* of the man. I happened to be by when the duke and Miss Burdett Coutts were looking at the picture in Trafalgar Square, and heard the great captain say, looking at the portrait of Lady Douro: "That's quite shocking!" which it was, indeed, as Landseer acknowledged; and, said he, "I wonder the duke is any better, for he only sat half an hour."

It was interesting to see the great man looking at pictorial renderings of his exploits; they frequently figured on the Academy walls. Sir William Allan painted two, which appeared in the same exhibition: one represented the duke riding over the field of Waterloo by moonlight, when he is said to have "shed iron tears;" the other a frustrated attempt of some British sailors to escape from Boulogne. The duke's habit was to examine every picture in the exhibition that was visible to him; and I have seen him spend precisely the same time, and show the same interest—and no more—over pictures in which he figured gloriously, as he did in all others. If a friend were with him, he would make a remark, as I heard him on Allan's picture of the "Waterloo Fight." "Too much smoke!" said the duke.

Another celebrity whose remarks were striking enough was Rogers the poet, who, on seeing a rather poor, ill-drawn picture of Adam and Eve, exclaimed, "I deny that I am descended from that couple!"

It would be difficult to convey to the present generation any idea of the veneration that was felt for the great duke. Everybody, down to the street boys, knew him, and vied with each other in offering marks of respect. I cannot refrain from describing an incident that came under my own observation. I was descending the steps that lead from the Duke of York's column into St. James's Park, when I saw the duke on horseback, trotting slowly along, followed by his chocolate-coated groom, and attended by a dirty little boy who managed to keep pace with the duke's horse, now and again looking up at the rider. The duke's patience with his inquisitive follower failed as I descended the last step into the Park, for he stopped his horse and addressed the boy:

"What do you want?"

The boy put his hands into his pockets, was confused for a moment, and then, looking up at the duke, said,

"I want to see where you are going."

"I am going there," said the duke, pointing to the Horse Guards. "Now go about your business!"

The story told of Sydney Smith, who, on being asked by Landseer to sit to him, replied, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" is not true; but another and a better one, in which the young King of Portugal figured, may be relied upon, as I have Landseer's authority for its truthfulness. At one of the court balls Landseer attended, and when the King of Portugal, who was also a guest, was made aware of the presence of the great animal painter, he expressed his desire for an introduction. Landseer was presented accordingly, when the king, in his imperfect English, said, "Oh, Mr. Landseer, I am delighted to make your acquaintance—I am so fond of *beasts!*"

CHAPTER XXIII.

SUCCESS OF "THE RAILWAY STATION."

THE autumn of 1860 was taken up by studies for the picture of "The Railway Station." The preparations were on much the same lines as those for the "Derby Day." Many chalk drawings of separate figures and groups, many changes of composition and incident, before I could satisfy myself that I might commence the inevitable oil-sketch. I don't think the station at Paddington can be called picturesque, nor can the clothes of the ordinary traveller be said to offer much attraction to the painter—in short, the difficulties of the subject were very great; and many were the warnings of my friends that I should only be courting failure if I persevered in trying to paint that which was in no sense pictorial. My own doubts were great, I confess, and I well remember my surprise—on showing the sketch to the great Flatow—at the eagerness with which he engaged himself to take the picture, sketch, and copyright at a price that appeared to me then as one of the most exorbitant on record. As a matter of curiosity I append a copy of the agreement; by which it will be seen that I had reserved the right to exhibit the picture at the Royal Academy—a right afterwards resigned for a consideration in the shape of seven hundred and fifty pounds:

> "Memorandum of agreement made this tenth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and sixty, between William Powell Frith, R.A., of 10, Pembridge Villas, Bayswater, in the County of Middlesex, of the one part, and Louis Victor Flatow, of 23, Albany Street, Regent's Park, in the said County, picture-dealer, of the other part.
>
> "The said William Powell Frith agrees to sell to the said Louis Victor Flatow, and said Louis Victor Flatow agrees to buy, the large picture now being painted by the said William Powell Frith, called 'A Railway Station,' together with the original sketch and the copyright thereof, for the

sum of four thousand five hundred pounds, to be paid by instalments as follows: Five hundred pounds on the first day of December next ensuing; five hundred pounds on the first of March, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and a like sum at the expiration of every succeeding three months, till the picture is completed, when the balance, if any, shall in any case be paid . . . .

"The said Louis Victor Flatow shall allow the picture to be exhibited at the Royal Academy in the Exhibition of the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, or in the following Exhibition.

"W. P. Frith,
"L. V. Flatow."

The above is all that is of interest in a somewhat lengthy document.

On August 28 I find the first entry of the commencement of the large picture of "The Railway Station:"

"Commenced picture of railway platform; another long journey, to which I go with almost as good a heart as I did to the 'Derby Day.' May it be as successful!"

I worked steadily on to the end of the year, and I closed my diary with:

"Once more in full swing at an important work, next in importance to the 'Derby Day,' which some say it will excel in merit and attractiveness. I am doubtful. The subject is good, but I don't feel so warm upon it as I did upon the other. Doubtful of myself. Damped by the indifference of my artist-friends. Let me remember that —— and —— treat what I have done so far with the greatest indifference, and see if the result justifies their opinion. If so, I am utterly deceived and conceited, and the blow that my confidence receives will be deserved. In the meantime let me do all I can to insure success—work and wait."

The whole of the year 1861, with fewer interruptions than usual, was spent on "The Railway Station." My diary records incessant work, and the employment of a multitude of models. I fear there is little to tell that would interest my readers, but I desire to reiterate, for the information of young painters, that every object, living or dead, was painted from nature—often imperfectly enough, as the picture proves. The police officers represented as arresting a criminal on the eve of escape were painted from two detectives well known at that time, Messrs. Haydon and Brett, the latter of whom I believe still survives. They were admirable sitters, and when I complimented them on their patience they took small credit for doing for me what they had often done for criminals of a deeper dye, namely, standing on the watch, hour after hour, in the practice of their profession, waiting for a thief or a murderer.

One of the incidents in the picture represents a foreigner whose idea of a cab-fare differs considerably from that of the driver of the vehicle, and he is consequently subjected to a bullying not uncommon under similar circumstances. The original of the foreigner was a mysterious individual who taught my daughters Italian ; he hailed from Venice, at that time groaning under Austrian rule. He was a man of distinguished manners ; and we were given to understand that he was a nobleman whose head was wanted in Venice to serve a very different purpose from that to which I put it in this country. At first he refused to sit, as he dreaded recognition by some aristocratic friends who might come to England ; and it was only on my promising that I would avoid making a likeness of him that I succeeded in overcoming his reluctance. If I am to keep to my determination to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in these reminiscences, I must here confess that I deceived the Italian count from the first; for, unless I caught the character of the face, I knew my model would be useless to me. The difficulty then was to prevent the portrait being seen till it was finished: this was accomplished on one pretence or other; but the inevitable moment came at last, and never can I forget the torrent of broken English that was poured upon me when my sitter first saw his face in the picture. "You say it shall not be like me, and it is as if I see me in a look-glass. You have betray me—it is perfide—my friends will recognize me. If I thought it was to be so I would not have do it."

I fear my conduct was as indefensible as that of poor Haydon under somewhat similar circumstances; or only to be excused on the ground that in the cause of art the end justifies the means. As one of the principal actors in the Haydon case told me all the circumstances, I can vouch for their truth. The readers of Haydon's life are aware of his many arrests for debt and his consequent imprisonment in the King's Bench, where he was attracted by a boisterous travesty of an election performed by the prisoners, from whom he painted a picture called "The Mock Election," which was bought by George IV., and is now at Windsor Castle. Nearly all the models for the work were the actors in the burlesque, and ready to hand; he was at a loss, however, for one, the official who swears in the members; and reflection seems to have brought to his mind the father of his old friend and fellow-townsman Hart, R.A. (who told me the story), as being exactly suited to his purpose. Haydon wrote to Hart, and, telling him what he wanted, begged him to allow his father to sit. Those who knew Mr. Hart will remember that he was not distinguished for personal beauty; but he was an Adonis in comparison with his father, whose physiognomy displayed the most unfavorable characteristics of the Jewish race. Mr. Hart, senior, lived with his son; who was an estimable person in all respects, and remarkable for his devotion to his father and his extreme sensitiveness in all that concerned him. It was not to be wondered at then that a very indignant refusal was sent in reply to Haydon's letter, together with vehement reproaches for his attempt to place the father of an old friend in so ridiculous and humiliating a position.

This brought a long and repentant letter from Haydon, which closed with a prayer for forgiveness; and the hope that a proof that animosity had ceased should be shown by the elder Hart being allowed to breakfast with the artist in prison, on the following Sunday morning.

With a heart overflowing with forgiveness on the part of both father and son, the former wended his way to breakfast in the King's Bench. Hart told me that his father had not been long gone before it occurred to him, knowing the old gentleman's kindly and somewhat weak character—and knowing, also, the character of Haydon—it would, perhaps, be as well if he were to go himself and see that the artist's well-known devotion to his art had not made him forgetful of truth and honor. He argued with himself that such a betrayal was impossible, but in vain; and at last started for the prison, where he found Haydon at work, just finishing a wonderful likeness of the old man swearing in a dandy on a piece of burned stick.

I take this opportunity of recommending a study of the life and death of poor Haydon — than whom a more enthusiastic, well-intending, and mistaken being never existed — to the attention and study of students. I well remember the shock of his sad death, which distressed, if it scarcely surprised, all who knew him. Maclise first heard of it at the Athenæum Club, and seeing Turner reading a newspaper he went to him and said,

"I have just heard of Haydon's suicide. Is it not awful?"

Turner, without looking up from his paper, said:

"Why did he stab his 'mother'?"

"Great Heaven!" said Maclise, "you don't mean—"

"Yes. He stabbed his mother."

No explanation could be obtained from Turner, but he alluded, no doubt, to Haydon's attacks upon the Academy, to which he owed his education, and which were, indeed, the cause of his ruin.

The opportunity for a display of what Haydon called "high art" arrived at last by the proposed decoration of the Houses of Parliament with historical pictures—a consummation that he had been agitating, in season and out of season, all his life—and then to see himself passed over, left out in the cold, while younger men took the prizes and gained all the employment, was a most cruel blow; and one cannot read of it in Tom Taylor's admirable life of the artist without almost tearful sympathy. My friend the late John Thomas, the author of all the sculpture that decorates the exterior of the Houses, told me that on the day of the decision — so fatal to Haydon — he was lunching at a restaurant near the Houses of Parliament, when his attention was attracted to a man who, with a bottle of wine before him, was leaning on the table, the upper part of his face covered by his hand. As Thomas looked, thinking he knew the man, the tears fell slowly down the stranger's face. In a few minutes the hand was removed, and poor Haydon was revealed.

I must return to "The Railway Station," which was completed in March, 1862, after rather more than a year of incessant work. As I have said elsewhere, there were no exhibitions in those days except the annual ones, and no single-picture exhibitions at all. The "Railway" was a great success. I find that twenty-one thousand one hundred and fifty people paid for admission in seven weeks, and the subscription for the engraving was equally surprising and satisfactory. The critics contradicted one another, as usual, without doing good or harm to me or the picture. Flatow was triumphant; coaxing, wheedling, and almost bullying, his unhappy visitors. Many of them, I verily believe, subscribed for the engraving to get rid of his importunity. He used to boast that he could induce the most unpromising visitor to subscribe; and on one occasion, as I was talking to him in the outer room, a fashionable, languid-looking young gentleman, having seen the picture, was on the point of taking his umbrella and his departure. I whispered to Flatow:

"I will bet you half a crown you don't get that man to subscribe."

"Done with you!" said Flatow, and immediately went to the young visitor and, touching his hat, said: "I beg pardon, sir — have you seen a specimen of the manner in which this wonderful picture is about to be engraved?"

"N-no," drawled the dandy.

The umbrella was put back, and the visitor returned to the picture in the custody of Flatow. In a very few moments he came back in the act of buttoning his gloves; betrayer and victim exchanged farewell salutes, and the former, rejoining me, said:

"I will trouble you for two-and-sixpence!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

"THE MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES."

The great success that had attended my modern-life subjects encouraged me to further effort in the same direction, and I forthwith arranged compositions for three pictures of London street scenes, to be called "Morning," "Noon," and "Night." The first represented the early dawn of a summer's morning, with a variety of incidents possible to the occasion; homeless wanderers, asleep and sleepless; burglars stopped by police red-handed; flower-girls returning from Covent Garden with their early purchases; belated young gentlemen whose condition sufficiently proved that the evening's amusement would not bear the morning's reflection; with other episodes more or less characteristic.

In "Noon" the *mise-en-scène* was Regent Street in full tide of active life. Ladies in carriages, costermongers in donkey-carts, dog-sellers, a blind beggar conducted across the street by his daughter and his dog, foreigners studying a map of bewildering London, etc., etc. The night scene was intended for the Haymarket by moonlight, the main incident being the exit of the audience from the theatre; a party is about to enter a carriage, and a gentleman is placing a young lady's cloak closely about her shoulders, in tender, lover-like fashion. This is being observed by an overdressed and berouged woman, whose general aspect plainly proclaims her unhappy position; and by the expression of her faded though still handsome face, she feels a bitter pang at having lost forever all claim to manly care or pure affection.

How I should have delighted in trying to realize all that these subjects were capable of, no tongue can tell; but I will describe as briefly as possible how that, to me, most desirable consummation was prevented. I had the honor of being desired to paint a picture of the marriage of the princess royal and the Prince of Prussia. The "command" surprised me in the act of finishing the "Derby Day," and I was permitted to urge the claims of that work, and its owners, as an excuse for declining a task afterwards so ably performed by my friend Phillip; but when I was again summoned to a more formidable effort in the shape of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, I felt I must obey; though I was aware of the fearful difficulties that such a subject presented—scarcely exaggerated by what Landseer said to me when he heard of my temerity: "So you are going to do the marriage picture? Well! for all the money in this world, and all in the next, I wouldn't undertake such a thing." Not much appalled by this and other warnings, undertake it I did; and the street scenes, for which I was to receive the incredible sum of ten thousand pounds from Mr. Gambart, a well-known and esteemed dealer of that time, were put on one side.

To satisfy those who might quite excusably refuse to believe in the folly of such an offer (it was an offer, for my impudence, great as it was, must not be credited with such an audacious *demand*), I append the agreement which legally bound painter and purchaser to the terms of the engagement:

> "Memorandum of agreement made this twenty-ninth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, between William Powell Frith, of No. 10, Pembridge Villas, Bayswater, in the County of Middlesex, Esquire, R.A., of the one part, and Ernest Gambart, of No. 120, Pall Mall, in the said County, Esquire, of the other part.
>
> "The said William Powell Frith agrees to accept a commission to paint for the said Ernest Gambart, and the said Ernest Gambart agrees to give a commission to paint, three pictures by the said William Powell Frith, and to be called 'The Streets of London' (such pictures to consist of three parts as hereafter mentioned); and the said William Powell Frith agrees to sell the copyright therein, together with the original sketches thereof, and all further sketches or drawings made or to be made in furtherance of the said pictures, for the sum of ten thousand pounds, to be paid by instalments as follows, namely: Five hundred pounds on the signing of this agreement; five hundred pounds at the expiration of three calendar months from the commencement of the said pictures, and a like sum of five hundred pounds at the expiration of every succeeding three

calendar months until the whole of the said sum of ten thousand pounds shall be paid, or until the said pictures shall be completed; in case the same shall be completed before, the said sum of ten thousand pounds shall be fully paid, in which case the balance which shall be then unpaid shall immediately, upon such completion and delivery of the said paintings and sketches, be paid.

(Signed) "W. P. Frith,
"Ernest Gambart."

With the final clauses of the agreement—being solely legal technicalities—it is unnecessary to trouble the reader.

I again quote from my diary:

"*Sunday, Jan.* 13, '68.—In the evening a letter from Eastlake, to say the queen wished me to paint the marriage of the Prince of Wales."

"*Jan.* 18.—Gambart called, and agreed to the postponement of the street pictures in consequence of the queen's wish that I should paint the marriage of the Prince of Wales."

"*Jan.* 29.—Sir C. Phipps writes to say the queen agrees to my terms for the marriage of the Prince of Wales—three thousand pounds."

"*March* 10.—Sees me in a court suit, sword, etc., at the marriage of the Prince of Wales; a glorious subject for pageantry and color. I like the subject, and think I can make a great deal of it."

This marriage ceremony, though somewhat longer than the usual one, was all too short for sketching possibilities. The whole scene must be remembered; and, beyond notes of the positions of the various personages in the chapel, which I entered in my sketch-book, I made no use of it. The ceremony left such a vivid impression upon my mind that I found no difficulty in preparing a tolerable sketch of the general effect; and in due course I was permitted to submit my attempt to the queen. On Tuesday, the 7th of April, I find my diary says: "To Windsor to see the queen, who spent more than half an hour with me. Seemed to be much pleased with the sketch, and was most agreeable; consented to all I proposed. The picture to be ten feet long. All charming so far."

"So far and no farther," for all too soon did my troubles begin. Letters had to be written by the score; answers came sometimes, and sometimes silence was the answer. In my applications for sittings and dresses I had forgotten to say that the picture was painted for, and by command of, the queen; when that announcement was added, consent in most cases came readily enough. All the bridesmaids but one promised to give me every advantage. From one lady I received no reply; but in place of it a visit from her mother, whom I found in a bewildered condition in my drawing-room. As I entered, the lady—who was looking with a puzzled expression at the different ornaments in the room—turned to me and said:

"I think I have made a mistake; it is the artist Frith I wish to see."

"Yes," said I, "I am that individual."

"Oh, really! and this is your—this is where you live?"

"Yes," replied I, "this is where I live;" then mentally, "and not in the garret where you had evidently been taught that most artists reside; and as I have a coal-cellar I am not forced to keep my fuel in a corner of the garret, and I am not always dining on the traditional red herring."

"Oh, then I have called in reply to a letter from you, asking my daughter, Lady ——, who was one of the princess's bridesmaids, to sit for a picture, to tell you it is impossible for her to sit; and as to her dress, which you ask for, she cannot spare it."

"Indeed," I replied, "I am sorry to hear this; however, I will represent what you tell me to the queen, and I dare say I shall be allowed to substitute one of my models, who must play the part of bridesmaid instead of Lady ——."

My visitor looked at me with an expression which, being interpreted, said as plainly as words, "What does this man mean with his queen, and his model, and his independent, impertinent manner!" After a pause she said:

"Why are you painting this picture? What is it for? Can I see it?"

"If you will walk this way," pointing to my painting-room, "I shall be happy to show it to you."

"What a queer place! Why do you shut up part of your window? Oh, that is the picture! Well, what is it done for?"

"It is done for the queen."

"Done for the queen? Who presents it to the queen?"

"Nobody—the queen presents it to herself; at any rate, she pays for it."

"Really?"

"Yes, really." Then in my most respectful manner I added, "I am well aware how much young ladies are engaged, and how disagreeable it must be for them to waste time in sitting to artists when it can be so much more usefully occupied; so if you will allow me, I will tell her majesty, through Lady Augusta Bruce, that your daughter is unable," etc.

After another pause, and in a somewhat petulant tone, the lady said:

"Really, I think the queen, when she asks ladies to be bridesmaids, should tell them that they may be called upon to go through the sort of penance you propose to inflict upon my daughter."

"I thought I had made it clear that I should prefer to use one of my models than that your daughter should be annoyed; and if you find she cannot consent I will write to Lady Augusta Bruce," etc.

"Well, good-morning. I will let you know; I will see what my daughter says."

The young lady came, and was one of the most agreeable of my sitters. Though I lost not a moment in impressing on all who were present at the wedding that I must have their dresses to paint from, I was told by several that the gowns were already taken to pieces (to one of which I was welcome), given away, or cut up into mementoes of the interesting event, etc. In reply, I threatened them with the queen if the dresses were not produced; and, strange to say, the destroyed ones became miraculously whole again and were sent to me. So far I was successful with the English, but with the foreigners I was beaten now and then. The Duchess of Brabant, now Queen of the Belgians, wore a magnificent robe of moiré antique of a lovely purple color. She was a very handsome woman, in a prominent position in the foreground; in fact, in what we call the very "eye of the picture." Those days were days of crinoline, and the space taken up in the picture was great; and great was my distress when I was told that the duchess had already departed, and the robes had vanished also. Those who knew Lady Augusta Bruce (afterwards wife of the Dean of Westminster) do not require to be told that she was one of the most delightful women that ever lived; her kindness to me in all my troubles I can never forget. We grieved together over the absent duchess's dress, and Lady Augusta said:

"We are going to Cobourg, and I will try to manage it."

In a letter written to my sister, dated August 23, 1863, I find the following:

> "I have had a long letter from Lady Augusta from Cobourg. She has succeeded in getting me the Duchess of Brabant's robes, but not without the queen herself having to intercede for them, and I am to pledge myself neither to *smoke* nor *drink beer* in their presence."

I kept my word with some difficulty as regards smoking, easily in respect of beer; but why these restrictions! On Lady Augusta's return the mystery was solved. The duchess had lent dresses to Belgian painters, who had returned them not only smelling of tobacco, but beer-stained also.

The Danish princes and princesses baffled me completely. They had no time in the short space allowed them in England to sit to be painted—scarcely for their photographs. I had therefore to trust to that most unsatisfactory process for my likenesses of them, which are consequently the worst in all respects in the whole picture; and if I had not had a friend at the Court of Denmark I should have been left lamenting for the dresses, orders, helmets, etc., of the male personages. With regard to the ladies, not the slightest help was afforded me. The present Queen of Denmark and the Princess Dagmar, now Empress of Russia, were painted from photographs, and the Duchess of Brabant from description only. The King of Greece never sat at all; but a very charming young man, Prince Frederick—an elder brother of the Grecian King, and a student at Oxford or Cambridge—came to Windsor on a visit to the queen and the Crown Prince of Prussia (then staying at the castle), and gave me a sitting; the crown prince staying with us the while to amuse the young gentleman, which he seemed to do most effectually, for the two never ceased talking—in a language that I did not understand—for an hour and a half at least. When the sitting was over, a difficulty took place at the door of the Rubens room—my temporary studio—as to which of the two young men should take precedence; there they stood, each refusing to go first, till at last the Crown Prince of Prussia cut the knot by backing through the doorway, the Dane following face to face.

The Danish prince left immediately for his college; and when he next found himself face to face with the Prince of Prussia, it was on one of the battle-fields in Schleswig-Holstein.

When the crown princess was sitting for me, she endeavored to make me understand the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty. She talked most admirably, and no doubt would have succeeded in enlightening an ordinary understanding; but the difficulty becomes great when the listener is also occupied in a painful endeavor to catch a likeness. Anyway, I could not understand the *pro* and *con* of the dispute between the powers.

One of the most picturesque and conspicuous figures at the marriage was the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh. He wore the Eastern dress and was covered with jewels—I was about to say blazed with them—but the diamonds, being uncut, looked to me like bits of dull glass, with just as much glitter. They had to be painted, however, and the prince was willing to wear them; but, as they were of fabulous value, he was naturally reluctant to leave them with me; and he was only induced to do so on the condition that his servant remained with them, and with the understanding that they were to be deposited each night at Coutts's Bank. This the servant promised; but, seeing that I possessed a burglar-proof iron safe, he trusted them to its keeping, and me with the keys, remarking : "Now, if the prince knew of this, he would be awake all night."

My diary again records day after day of incessant work. I must quote from it, and largely also from letters written to my sister at the time. The bridesmaids were kindness itself; and if any representation of them fails in likeness or otherwise, the fault is not theirs. My regard for truth compels me to say they were not all beautiful, but one left little to be desired in that respect. Lady Diana Beauclerk, daughter of the Duke of St. Albans, was not only beautiful, but as agreeable as she was handsome.

On the 20th of May my diary says : "At 12 came the Duchess of St. Albans and her daughter, the Lady Diana Beauclerk—a most sweet creature—who sat divinely for nearly three hours. I made a lovely beginning. Later in the day came S. Oxon, who stayed twenty minutes to no purpose."

I must say, however, for the bishop, that, on the whole, he was a very satisfactory sitter—giving me every opportunity, of which I availed myself to good purpose. I cannot refrain from recording an incident in connection with the bishop's likeness.

The Lord Chancellor Westbury and the bishop came to loggerheads in the House of Lords. Westbury spoke of the "saponaceous prelate," and used other disrespectful expressions in a discussion on some forgotten subject. The bishop, in reply, begged the learned lord, if he had no respect for himself, to respect the assembly in which he, perhaps unexpectedly—the bishop would not say undeservedly—found himself.

When the lord chancellor sat for me, his eye caught the form of the Bishop of Oxford, and he said : "Ah ! Sam of Oxford. I should have thought it impossible to produce a tolerably agreeable face, and yet preserve any resemblance to the Bishop of Oxford." And when the bishop saw my portrait of Westbury, he said : "Like him ? yes ; but not wicked enough."

The Speaker of the House of Commons, Denison, afterwards Lord Ossington, told me the following anecdote of Lord Westbury :

"Lord Ebury had brought into the House of Lords a bill with the object of effecting certain changes in the Burial Service; several animated discussions had taken place, just at the time that some unpleasant disclosures were revealed in which Lord Westbury was implicated, and which led to his resignation of the chancellorship. The noble lord announced his resignation in a speech which his friends said was pathetic enough to melt the hearts of his hearers; but which his enemies said was a masterpiece of affected repentance and hypocritical mockery. The House was greatly moved, and as the lord chancellor was leaving it he met Lord Ebury, and said to him: 'My lord, you can now read the Burial Service over me, with any alteration you think proper.'"

My mention of the speaker reminds me of his being the possessor of a study of the Princess of Wales, which I sold to him after using it for the larger picture. I don't know the exact age of the princess at the time of her marriage, and should be careful to keep it to myself if I did; but she was very young and very beautiful, as all the world knows. She very graciously consented to come to my house, and to afford me every assistance in the way of sittings for my picture.

The princess is well known for her kindness of heart. Ah! how that heart would have ached if its owner had realized the aching of mine, when I, too soon, discovered that the illustrious young lady did not know that the keeping her face in one position, for a few minutes even, was necessary to enable an artist to catch a resemblance of it. That first sitting can I ever forget? I did not dare to complain till after two or three more fruitless attempts. With downright failure staring me in the face, I opened my heart to the Prince of Wales. "You should scold her," said the prince.

Just at this time the princess was sitting for her bust to the celebrated sculptor Gibson, R.A., in a room at Marlborough House. I was sent for by the prince, and, before I was admitted to an interview, I was shown into the sculptor's studio, and found him waiting for a sitting from the princess. The bust was already in an advanced stage.

I did not think it was very like, and, in reply to Gibson, said so. "Well, you see," said Gibson, "the princess is a delightful lady, but she can't sit a bit."

Just at this moment I was summoned to the prince, whom I found with the princess; and I saw, or thought I saw, a sort of pretty smiling pout, eloquent of reproof, and of half-anger with me. The prince had something to show me—photographs, I think—and then he led the way to Gibson; the princess and I following.

No sooner did we find ourselves in the sculptor's presence, than—after some remarks upon the bust—the prince said: "How do *you* find the princess sit, Mr. Gibson?" "Now," thought I, "if ever man was in an awkward fix, you are, Mr. Gibson; for, after what you said to me a few minutes ago, you cannot, in my presence, compliment the beautiful model on her sitting."

The prince looked at Gibson, and Gibson looked in dead silence at the prince, and then at the princess; he then looked again at the prince, smiled, and shook his head.

"There, you see, you neither sit properly to Mr. Gibson nor to Mr. Frith."

"I do—I do," said the lady. "You are two bad men!"

And then we all smiled; and Gibson went on with his work, the princess sitting admirably for the short time that I remained.

This was a good omen, as I afterwards found; for the princess sat most kindly and steadily for me at Windsor; and I quite believe that the seemingly naughty behavior during the first sittings arose from her ignorance of the necessity for a fair amount of carefulness in keeping the position required.

The prince's sittings, and unvarying considerate kindness, left nothing to be desired. The same must be said of all the princesses; and to enforce this, I may quote from a letter written at the time to my sister:

"WINDSOR, *Nov.* 8, 1863.

"Here we are cheek by jowl (rather a vulgar expression that) with royalty, and if painting were not so difficult, it would be very delightful indeed; for nothing can exceed the kindness of everybody with whom I come in contact. And how the stories have arisen about artists' time being wasted, I can't think; for with me the royalties come to their time, and sit admirably, save that the sittings are shorter than I like. The queen sits to-morrow from one till two. I have tried hard to get her to sit for an hour and a half; but she says she cannot spare the time *at once*, and would rather sit any number of times an hour at a time. The queen is most kind; but I can tell you more about all concerned to-morrow. As to the princesses, they would be considered most charming girls anywhere; none of their photographs do them justice. The difficulty is to keep in mind in whose presence you are—they laugh and talk so familiarly, and still sit well. Princess Beatrice, too, is a most sweet little creature, and as I took Princess Helena's advice, and *overawed* her a little, she sat right well; but she began to take liberties at last, and I am afraid next time I shall be troubled to keep her quiet. As to Prince William of Prussia, of all the little Turks he is one of the worst; and how I am to get a likeness of him I don't know. I let him paint a little on the picture, which delighted him. At the same time I was painting Princess Beatrice's dress from the lay figure, when the door of the Rubens room (where I am at work) was thrown open, and a man shouted, as if he were proposing a toast at a public dinner, 'The Crown Prince of Prussia and the Royal Family.' And in marched the crown prince (who had arrived at the castle unexpectedly) with his three children, their nurses, and all the English princesses and their attendants. Fortunately the room is an immense one, or it would have been filled; and of all the rows!—those children, shouting, laughing, and romping with the princesses. I was looking at little Prince William, and talking to Princess Helena, when the royal imp looked up in my face and said: 'Mr. Fiff, you are a nice man; but your whiskers—' when the princess stopped his mouth with her hand. He struggled to get her hand away, and again said, 'Your whiskers—' when she stopped him again, blushing, and laughing till she could scarcely move. However, they carried the youngster to the other end of the room, and soon brought him back to good manners. The crown prince—who is one of the finest and most manly-looking figures I ever saw—sat for a while, and I did the outline of his head, and shall make a very successful thing of him. The crown princess comes on Tuesday, when I hope to get a nice likeness of her. . . . Little Prince William calls the picture 'Uncle Wales's Wedding.' The princesses always speak of the queen as 'mamma,' and they are altogether like a happy middle-class family. And now I think I have told you enough till next time.

"I am, as ever,
"Your affectionate brother."

The whisker mystery was never revealed, but I inflicted a very unintentional and regretted punishment on the little boy, which I fancy he may remember to this day. The picture of the marriage was ten feet long, and, as I said above, I portioned off one of the lower corners of it——about a foot square—which I lent to the young prince (he was about seven years old, I think) to paint a picture upon, giving him paints and brushes, but telling him to keep strictly within the boundaries of his own property. I was working quietly at my part of the picture when I was roused by an exclamation of alarm from the lady in whose charge the prince always came to me, who cried :

"Look at his face! What has he been doing to it?"

Well, he had simply been wiping his brushes upon it, for it was streaked with vermilion, bright blue, and other pigments.

"What is to be done? If the princess should see him she would—"

"Oh," said I, "I can easily remove the paint."

And so saying I dipped some clean rag into turpentine and effectually rubbed off the color, or, to be correct, I was rapidly removing it, when I was stopped by violent screams from the young gentleman, accompanied by a severe cuff from his little fist. The turpentine had found out a little spot or scratch on his face, and no doubt gave him great pain—great indeed, if one might take scream after scream as a proof. He tore away from me, after a parting kick, and took refuge under a large table and yelled till he was tired, his governess the while in terror that he might be heard.

I don't think he forgot or forgave my "remedial efforts," for he took much pleasure after in tormenting me by sitting so badly that I failed in producing anything in the picture resembling him. This young gentleman is now married and is a father, and I trust a happy one.

It was a matter of regret to me that I was deprived, by the lamented death of the prince consort, of a critic whose remarks would have been of great use to me. Of all the princesses, I think the crown princess showed the greatest knowledge of the principles of art. The queen, being herself an artist of experience and ability, more than once assisted me by suggestions. Among the many sitters who came to me was one who much interested me—the Honorable Something Byng, called "Poodle" Byng—a man of fashion about town in the early part of this century, a contemporary and friend of Brummel, about whom he had many stories. Mr. Byng was a very old gentleman when he assisted at the wedding of the Prince of Wales, as is abundantly proved by the fact of his having been at the marriage of George IV., who, when Prince of Wales, was united to Caroline of Brunswick in 1795. Mr. Byng, then a boy of sixteen, perfectly remembered the whole scene, and as perfectly described it to me.

"Those were drinking-days," said the old gentleman, "and the prince never spared the bottle. The company had been some time assembled at St. James's Palace, waiting for the prince, without whom, you know, the ceremony could not take place, the king and queen sitting in great impatience; the king now and again tapping the floor with his foot, then saying something in an angry tone to the queen. At last in came the prince, attended by some gentlemen—I forget who they were—his face flushed, you know, and a little uncertain on his legs. The king looked very black at him, I can tell you. However, he got through very well. The princess was very nervous."

"Was she pretty?" asked I.

"Well, no—fresh, healthy-looking woman, though—but about as opposite to this princess as George IV. was to our prince."

At the time Mr. Byng sat to me he was considerably over eighty. He lived in Duke Street, St. James's, and always walked to and from Bayswater; and boasted of the feat, in which he was justified, I think.

I remember with peculiar pleasure my short acquaintance with the Duchess of Cambridge and Princess Mary. Both those ladies sat delightfully, and I think I succeeded in producing fair likenesses of them.

Sir Edward Cust—a distinguished authority on matters of warfare—was Master of Ceremonies to the Court, and took his place in St. George's Chapel as a matter of right. He sat to me many times, and on one occasion, in the latter part of a summer's day, when I was much fatigued by my day's work, I said:

"I feel a little tired, Sir Edward; would you mind my smoking a cigar?"

"Not in the least," replied Sir Edward, "if you don't mind my being sick, which I certainly shall be the moment you begin."

The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh had a face of a handsome type, but somewhat expressionless. It seemed strange to me to find myself painting from one who was born ruler of a bigger country than England, who had been dragged across the sea, jewels and all, to assist at the wedding of a barbarian on a little Western island, and—what he may have considered an additional punishment—he was made to sit for his likeness, and compelled to lend his treasured jewels to be copied by an infidel whose neck it might have been his delight to wring if it had been in his power. He is a thoroughly good young man, his servant told me: "he reads no book but the Bible, which he knows from cover to cover." He told me he used to be decorated with the Koh-i-Noor when a boy, and he was very pleased that the queen was now the possessor of that remarkable jewel.

I think it must be admitted that as sitters for their pictures, the men bear away the palm from the ladies. There are exceptions, of course, on both sides, but, so far as my experience goes, I have found the male more patient than the female; the result being—notably in the picture in question—a superiority of likeness in all the men. The Prince of Saxe-Weimar, the Prince of Leiningen, the crown prince, and many others, were model sitters, patient, good-natured, and tolerant—perhaps indifferent—of the, sometimes, unflattering result of their patience. Not so some of the ladies. One—the aged wife of an ambassador—was so shocked by my portrait of her that she implored me to rub it out. She spoke imperfect English, and she said, "Oh, mister, that is not me. I cannot have grown like that. I will give you my likeness to copy;" and she sent me a drawing done from her when she was a lovely girl of eighteen, with an urgent request that I would correct my libel of her immediately. I declined; and the figure remains, a by no means unflattered copy of a very plain old lady.

The bishops were, one and all, delightful. Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who in his early days was head-master of Harrow, sat many times, and amused me by anecdotes. On one occasion, he told me, as he was passing one of the houses at Harrow occupied by students, he saw a rope dangling from one of the windows. He seized the rope, and instantly found it pulled so vigorously from the other end, that his feet were off the ground, and he was hanging in the air and drawn slowly up to the window before he had time to think of the danger of his position. Most fortunately the window was not far from the ground, for no sooner had the head and shoulders of the master appeared before the astonished and dismayed eyes of the students—who expected a very different apparition—than they let go the cord, and the future archbishop lay sprawling on the ground. "The young rascals," said the archbishop, "had sent one of their companions into the town for something or other, and that was the way he was to rejoin them." The archbishop, as primate, was the officiating clergyman at the prince's marriage, being assisted by the bishops of London, Winchester, Chester, and Oxford, the latter in his robes as Prelate of the Order of the Garter.

Sumner, Bishop of Winchester, was a very old man, nearer eighty than seventy; he seemed so hale and active that I was induced to ask him if he had adopted any special regimen as regards diet, exercise, etc. "Well," said he, "I have eaten of whatever good things were put before me, and I have drunk a bottle of port wine every day since I was a boy. The only precaution I have taken has been in the quality of the wine; for unless it was old and good, I would have none of it."

The Bishop of Chester came to London on purpose to sit for me. I only troubled him twice, and he sat so patiently that his portrait is one of the most like of all. He had a very characteristic face and a very long neck. The Bishop of Oxford told me the bishops called him their "Neck-or-nothing brother."

"A certain marquis, now dead, had the character—rightly or wrongly ascribed to him—of being parsimonious to an extent often verging on absolute meanness. In conversation with the Bishop of London, the miserly disposition of this nobleman was discussed; when the bishop said: "I have heard these stories, and must believe some of them; nor do I think them irreconcilable with a lavish generosity in directions where help is required for deserving objects, as a check for ten thousand pounds for 'The Curates' Augmentation Fund'—which I have at this moment in my pocket signed by the very nobleman in question—proves."

To the many applications made by me to the various personages who were present at the marriage of the Prince of Wales I received but one refusal to sit. All the stalls in St. George's Chapel were filled by Knights of the Garter in their robes; and among them was a noble duke celebrated for being the possessor of a very broad-brimmed hat and a very ordinary—not to say ugly—face. My first appeal failed in eliciting a reply, but to my second letter I received the following answer:

> "DEAR SIR,—I have no time to sit for a picture. If my form must appear in your work, allow me to suggest that, in respect of my face, you might bury it in my hat, in the manner of people when they go to church.
>
> "Your obedient servant, —— ——."

Some of the figures in the distance were so small that I refrained from troubling the originals, finding good photographs sufficient guides. Among these was Mr. Disraeli, whose face on the canvas was certainly not larger than a shilling; and I told Mrs. Disraeli, when she called to see the picture, that I could not think of troubling her husband, and on some excuse or other I escaped showing it to her, as I knew she would be distressed at finding the great man playing so small a part in it. The worship of that estimable lady for her husband is well known, and I may relate here an instance of it.

My old friend John Phillip, R.A., was commissioned by the speaker, Denison, to paint a picture of a portion of the House of Commons. The work was to contain portraits of some of the most eminent members of the Government and of the Opposition. On one side are Lord Palmerston, who is speaking, Cornewall Lewis, Lord John Russell, Lord Lytton, etc., and opposite sit Disraeli and those of his inclining. Phillip told me that, after the first sitting from Disraeli—the colors being necessarily somewhat crude—the lady and gentleman took their departure; but, after seeing her husband into the carriage, Mrs. Disraeli returned to the studio, and, walking quickly up to the painter, said, "Remember his pallor is his beauty!" and, without another word, rejoined her husband.

Here I make further quotations from my letters to my sister. I find in November, 1863, I write:

"I must confess that, if there be any shortcomings in the picture, I don't think I can fairly attribute them to the royal people, for nothing could be kinder than they have been; and I quite believe that the short sittings, in the present state of things, are unavoidable.

"Princess Louise told me the other day that she and Princess Helena were at the Great Exhibition, and Princess Helena, feeling some one tugging at her dress, turned round, and heard a woman exclaim, 'I've touched her, I've touched her! Oh, it's a noble family!'

"Now, without the least flunkey feeling (and I don't think anybody would accuse me of such a weakness), I don't think I ever was more surprised than I have been with the royal children; the most unaffected, genial, pleasant creatures, without the least pride of place about them.

"The queen will sit again in a few days, and that will be the last opportunity I shall have till the spring—perhaps the last, as I have been very successful with her majesty, although my sittings have been so short. . . Scarcely a day passes without some one who is staying in the castle coming into my workroom; the other day Lord Carlisle and some interesting people, among whom was the Duke de Nemours, whose face I shall never forget—he looked history. I thought I could find traces of Henry IV., the Guises, the Bourbons—a kind of exemplar of the French royal blood. It was most curious—not fanciful on my part. And his manners had a sort of old-world dignity and gentle formality that was inexpressibly striking; it was like talking with the dead; and if he had been dressed in the high boots and armor of Henry IV. the very man would have been before you. When he had gone, and I looked round at the stately Rubenses in their high ruffs and peaked beards, I could scarcely believe I had not been talking to one of them. I assure you I am not exaggerating—it was most striking; and so are others who come, only they waste my time.

"Ever your affectionate brother."

Another anecdote related to me by one of the princesses —I forget which—is worth recording. After the marriage of the Crown Prince of Prussia with the Princess Royal of England the happy pair embarked at Gravesend for their future home. To reach their vessel they had to pass through a dense mass of people by means of a long passage, or gangway, closely beset on both sides by all sorts and conditions of men and women. As the royal couple walked slowly along the prince felt his arm touched; he turned, and was thus addressed by a navvy: "Now mind you behave well to her when you gets her over there; if you don't, we'll pretty soon fetch her back again."

In another letter, of a later date:

"LONDON, *December* 20.

"MY DEAREST J——,—I confess I am right glad to find myself at home again, after the pains and troubles of Windsor; not that I have anything to complain of, as I said before, but that the difficulties have been so great. . . . When I tell you that, in less than seven weeks, I have finished the queen and the prince, nearly done the three English princesses, advanced the crown princess and her son almost to completion, quite done the crown prince, begun General Grey, Lady Mount-Edgecumbe, the lord chamberlain, and some others, and made a most satisfactory study of the Princess of Wales, you will admit I have made the most of my time. The queen came to see me just before she left, and all the princesses came to say good-bye. Little Princess Beatrice was most affectionate. She shook hands with me three times. She showed me the present she had prepared for Lady Augusta Bruce—who is to marry Dean Stanley almost immediately—a little ring made of forget-me-nots in diamonds, of which she was very proud. I believe the likeness I have done of the queen is satisfactory, only too faithful, I thought—not in the least flattered. I said as much to Princess Helena, and her reply was very characteristic. I said I thought the public would scarcely be satisfied, after the pretty-looking things they had been accustomed to. The princess said, 'The public—well, you may say to the public that mamma's children are delighted with it, and beg you never to touch it again; *we* think it perfect. . . .'

"Ever your affectionate brother."

I think it was at Windsor that I heard a story of the royal children, or, rather, of one of them, that I may relate, though I cannot vouch for the truth of it:

"Some years before the marriage of the Prince of Wales the present Lord ——, who suffers from a lame foot, was invited to Osborne. Previous to his arrival a discussion took place between the queen and the prince consort as to the advisability of drawing the children's attention to the nobleman's lameness, and at the same time warning them to take no notice of it, or whether it would be better, having regard to the thoughtlessness of children, to say nothing at all about it. After much consideration the latter idea was adopted. Lord —— came, played with the young royalties, and left very early one morning. When the children came to breakfast they looked for Lord ——, and one of them asked for him. The queen said, 'Lord —— has gone.'

"'There, now!' said one of the princes, whimpering, 'that is too bad. He has gone, and he promised to show me his foot.'"

Before I take my leave of Windsor I have to tell how I happened to see part of the body of Charles I.

One day, when I was sketching in St. George's Chapel, an elderly man—a verger, I think—came to me, and asked if I should like to see "a little bit of Charles I." The man seemed to be in his right mind; he was one of the officials that I had frequently seen in the chapel; well dressed, a gold chain with a locket attached to it—a watch, no doubt, at the end, in evidence on his waistcoat.

"I really don't know what you mean by a bit of Charles I.," said I. "How could I see such a thing?"

The locket was opened, and a small, dark object shown me."

"That," said the man, is a portion of the body of Charles I."

"And how did you become possessed of it?" asked I.

"Well, sir, it was in this way: When George IV. was prince regent I was a carpenter's boy doing odd jobs, with my master, about the castle, and we was ordered into the vaults just below where you are standing. There was the prince and some gentlemen, and one of the castle servants with a light; and they was evidently looking about for something, and they were some time before they found what they wanted. At last one of the gents—he was a doctor, I think—says, 'Here it is!' pointing to one of the coffins. He took the light and held it close, and you could read, 'King Charles, 1648'—I think that was the date, or something near it. Then the prince says to my master, 'Open the coffin, and be very careful how you do it;' and him and me did it, and we raised the lid, and there was a startler, I assure you! You know them pictures of King Charles in the castle? Well, sir, they *are* good likenesses, I can tell you; for there he was—the beard on the chin and the mustaches, just as he is drawn. One eye was wide open, but the other was gone; his face was just like life, only very brown; and round the throat there was a piece of black ribbon. 'Now take out the head,' said the prince, and my master took hold of it, but he seemed frightened, for his hands shook, and, just as the prince said, 'Look! the eye is going' (and so it was, for it turned to dust as we was looking), master's hand shook so that the head slipped through his fingers on to the ground; he said it had become so greasy he couldn't hold it. The prince was angry, and blew master up, and told one of the gentlemen to put it back in the coffin—which was done—and then they all went away, leaving us to close up the coffin. We was tidying up, when master said, 'Why, here is a bit of him!' and he picked up from the floor, where the head had fallen, a piece of flesh from the neck, and gave it to me for a keepsake. So I kept it ever since; and you may take your oath wherever you like that you have seen a part of the body of Charles I."

When the marriage picture was finished I was honored by a visit from the queen at my house in Pembridge Villas. Her majesty showed me the kindness she displays to all artists; and, though I was conscious of the many shortcomings of the picture, and quite aware that they could not escape her eyes, she found little or no fault, and left me under the impression that I had succeeded as well as could be expected, considering the great difficulties of the task.

The picture went to the Exhibition of 1865, and, from the nature of the subject, was very attractive. After trying the policeman, who failed to keep the crowd at a proper distance from the picture, an iron rail was again found necessary, and—after a fight—adopted.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GREAT ACTORS OF MY YOUTH.

In reading Evelyn's delightful "Diary" I had been struck by a description of a scene at the old palace at Whitehall—then occupied by Charles II. and his court—where debauchery of all kinds, and gambling in particular, were pretty generally practised. Evelyn describes a visit of himself and two friends to the palace, on the Sunday evening preceding the death of the king, in the following words:

"I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se'nnight I was witness of. The king sitting and toying with his concubines—Cleveland, Portsmouth, and Mazarin; a French boy singing love-songs in that glorious gallery; while about twenty of the greater courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table—a bank of at least two thousand pounds in gold before them—upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections with astonishment. Six days after was all in the dust!"

This was a splendid subject for a picture; but I should have preferred to have carried out my agreement with Mr. Gambart for the "Streets of London," and much regret now that I did not do so. I fancied that gentleman had grown cool on the subject of the "Streets;" and when I showed him the sketch for "Charles II.'s Last Sunday," he expressed himself so warmly in favor of it in preference to the "Streets" that I accepted a commission from him for three thousand guineas, and at the same time consented to cancel our agreement for the more extensive and expensive subject of the "London Streets."

Bad times have come upon us, and those pictures are, and ever will be, in the air—a matter of everlasting regret to me, from my conviction that my reputation will rest on the pictures I have painted from the life about me.

Before the picture of Charles had advanced far it changed hands, and became the property of Mr. Matthews, with whom it still remains, surrounded by most admirable specimens of the best artists of the day. It was during the progress of this picture that I received a very gratifying acknowledgment of supposed merit in the shape of the Belgian Order of Leopold, conferred on me on the occasion of the exhibition in Brussels of the picture of "Ramsgate Sands," kindly lent by the queen. I had several English rivals, who were naturally sore at being passed over in my favor; one of them being in excellent odor with the gentleman who did the art criticism in the *Athenæum*, and who, in noticing the exhibition at Brussels, was so kind as to announce that the decoration of the Order of Leopold was given to my picture, not because of its merits, but because it happened to belong to the queen; whereas, if merit had been the guide, the honor must have fallen on other shoulders. On reading this I thought it well to ascertain if these pleasant remarks had any foundation in truth, or whether, as I felt pretty certain, they were the outcome of the disappointment of the critic and his friend. I accordingly wrote to the Belgian official responsible in the matter, telling him that if what the *Athenæum* stated was the truth I should return the order. Here is his reply:

"BRUXELLES, *le* 7^{e} *Novembre*, 1866.

"MONSIEUR,—M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur me charge d'avoir l'honneur de répondre à la lettre que vous lui avez fait parvenir le 5 de ce mois.

"C'est à la suite d'une proposition émanant du Jury des récompenses de l'Exposition générale des Beaux-Arts de 1866, qu'une distinction honorifique vous à été conférée par le Gouvernement du Roi.

"Je vous prie de croire, Monsieur, que dans l'espèce, la considération du mérite des œuvres envoyées à nos expositions est la seule raison déterminante tant des propositions des Jury's, que des décisions que le Gouvernement prend ensuite.

"Pour ce qui vous concerne personnellement, je me plais à ajouter que le succès public a confirmé pleinement la sanction officielle qui a été accordée à votre talent.

"Je me fais donc un devoir de joindre mes félicitations à celles qui vous ont déjà été adressées par M. le Ministre de l'Intérieur, et je saisis cette occasion pour vous offrir l'assurance de mes sentiments les plus distinguée.

"L'Inspecteur des Beauxe-Arts,
"AD. VAN SOUST DE BORKENFELDT.

"A Monsieur W. P. Frith,
"Artiste peintre à Londres."

On receiving this expected and satisfactory confirmation of my opinion of the *Athenæum* critic, I wrote to the *Times* complaining of his conduct, and placing it in such a light as I should have thought would have produced a retractation and an apology. But no, the *Athenæum* maintained silence under proofs of a charge that would have been thought disgraceful by any respectable writer.

To return to Charles I., after much searching I found a man curiously like the king. He seemed in feeble health, but without any sign of fatal illness upon him; but, strange to say, he sat to me for the last time one Sunday, and before "that day se'nnight all was in the dust" with him as with his royal prototype. Yet another and a sadder death I have to record, that of my old and dear friend John Phillip, which began in my studio in front of my picture of Charles, which he had come to criticise. He had been long ailing, but on the day of his visit to me he seemed in unusual health and spirits. He had just told me the story of Disraeli and his "pallor" (related in the previous chapter), when he suddenly rubbed his hands furiously, and exclaimed:

"What is this?—what can be the matter?" He then staggered and fell into a chair, and said, "I hope to God this is not paralysis!"

"Nonsense!" said I; "don't frighten yourself—'tis but a bad attack of pins and needles," as he continued rubbing his hands.

But in an instant his face changed, was drawn terribly on one side, and his utterance became thick and unintelligible like that of a drunken man. I sent for a doctor, to whom, when he appeared, Phillip said:

"This is very strange—what is the matter with me?"

The doctor said nothing for a moment. Then finding, on his direction to the poor fellow to move his left leg, that he had lost all power over it, he shook his head, and told me to send for a conveyance and get the dying painter home as soon as possible. My dear old friend lingered for ten days, and then there died one of the greatest painters this country has produced, and one of the noblest and truest-hearted of men. We had been boys together. I regretted him, and regret him still; and right glad I am to find that his son Colin is taking a very high position as a water-color painter, as his admirable works—to say nothing of his admission into the Old Society of Water-Color Painters—sufficiently prove.

It was the custom till well into the present century for noblemen to wear their stars on all occasions, and I have heard that certain ribald remarks made by the many-headed on the appearance of these decorated nobles in the streets was the cause of the discontinuance of a practice that fell into desuetude soon after the time when clergymen ceased to walk about it in their gowns. Knowing this, I thought I might venture to decorate the king, in my picture, with the Order of the Garter. But here came a difficulty, for I was told that the star was differently formed to the one now worn. Good-fortune attended my inquiries, for I found that the actual "George" that was given by Charles I. to Bishop Juxon on the scaffold—with the word "Remember"—was in existence, and in the possession of the Duke of Sutherland, who had inherited it from his father, to whom it had been presented by George IV. Cardinal York, the last of the Stuarts, had bequeathed the order to the king.

I applied to the Duke of Sutherland, who kindly lent me the jewel, and my "Charles" now wears the order that very possibly decorated the real man on the occasion represented in the picture; for it has been conjectured, plausibly I think, that the bishop was to "remember" to give the order to the Prince of Wales, to whom it may have been consigned, in spite of Cromwell and his myrmidons.

My picture represents nearly a year's incessant work, and my diary shows constant evidence of a settled conviction of its success. It was my custom, the first day of the year, to express my opinion of my work and my anticipation of the result of it, so as to be able to test the truth or falseness of my judgment. Of course, I was often deceived, but the practice is one I would recommend to the young painter, as it may prove both a safeguard against unwarranted enthusiasm and an encouragement in moments of depression. As an example I quote from the diary of 1867, the year of the completion and exhibition of "Charles II.":

"I find in my last diary that the year '66 began big with the conviction that I was about another, and perhaps a greater, success. Time confirms that idea, and this year finds me slowly, but successfully, completing a picture which has been more than a common delight to me. It is not possible to exaggerate (to convey a notion, even, to the uninitiated) the delight that these things are if you can persuade yourself that you are in the right way. I think I am in that direction—hence my pleasure; and I can't believe myself to be such a fool as to feel in this way without good foundation for my feelings. We shall see. Once more work on—steadily, faithfully, trustingly, hopefully to the end."

I recommend the last paragraph to the attention of the student. When the picture went to the exhibition I find I wrote:

"Picture left, and joy go with it. Of course, alas! it is inferior to the old masters in every quality. It is a good thing as times go. We shall see. I am very likely wrong."

I have spoken in a previous page of the terrible sensation that thrills the wretched painter on the first sight of a picture on the walls of the Academy. Here is a true and faithful account of mine on the occasion of "Charles II.'s" appearance in Trafalgar Square:

"First sight of 'Charles' in the exhibition, and never shall I forget it. The picture looked brown and dingy, scarcely recognizable, all the bright colors gone. I wretched in the extreme; couldn't sleep; still all seemed pleased with it."

The after-success of the picture may show the young painter how little faith he may place upon his first impressions of his work in a modern exhibition—a success, indeed, that resulted in the necessity of placing a rail round the picture. One more quotation from the inevitable diary, and I have done with it and the "Charles" picture.

"*Monday, June* 4, '67.—To R.A., where I find a rail round the 'Charles,' to my great surprise and pleasure. This is the third rail round my work in the exhibition—first the 'Derby Day,' then the 'Royal Marriage,' and now 'The Last Sunday of Charles II.'—Eureka!"

With the great actors of my youth I had no personal acquaintance; but with those who have appeared within the last thirty years I have been on more or less intimate terms. Fechter was a frequent guest at Pembridge Villas. He had a taste for sculpture, and some proficiency in the practice of it. John Parry would have been as great as a painter as he was in his own inimitable performances, if he had devoted himself to the practice of painting with the assiduity that he bestowed on his own art. Some of those who may read these lines may remember "Mr. Roseleaf's Evening Party"—that extraordinary scene in which the great mimic made his audience see a whole roomful of people by simulation, and little tricks of expression and movement impossible to describe or to be repeated by another. The whole of the scene was constructed in my studio, and performed for the first time in the drawing-room. With Compton, the best actor of the minor Shakespearian characters, I was well acquainted. The man I knew best, and with whom I had most sympathy, was the American actor, Jefferson, whose performance of "Rip Van Winkle" can never be forgotten. Out of his art, he was a highly-cultivated man. He, too, would have been a good painter if he had gone the right way of becoming one. As it was (and perhaps as it is, for the admirable artist is still living and acting in America), his practice of painting a picture every morning is not conducive to the long-sustained effort necessary for the production of works of art. Jefferson shrank from the study of details. His ideas were poetic; but his pictures were painted without reference to nature, and consequently they were but dreams—beautiful often, but unreal and unsubstantial as dreams.

I think it was about the year 1866 that Sothern, with "Lord Dundreary," burst upon the town and took it by storm. The popularity of the actor was very great. I sought his acquaintance and painted his portrait, which is now, I believe, in New York. Sothern was a very amusing companion, but given to practical joking to an extent that approached mania. He was also a pretended believer in spirit-rapping, and as great a performer at table-rapping as he was on the stage; and I am ashamed to say I assisted him in some of his deceptions, and my friend Henry Tawell was as wicked as ourselves in that particular, as what I am going to relate will prove.

Sothern gave a great dinner, at which two young lords, whose names I suppress, were guests, with many others, all more or less believers. The drawing-room at Sothern's was a long room—it appeared to be two rooms flung into one—at one end of which, after dinner, Tawell was thrown by the actor into a mesmeric trance, in which he gave accurate descriptions of the interior of some of the guests' houses, to their utter amazement. I was far from the two criminals—at the other end of the room, and close to the two lords, who were looking and listening with faces that spoke faith and wonder.

"This must be some trick," said I. "The man cannot possibly describe what he has never seen."

"It is very wonderful," said Lord H——.

"Anyway, let us test him. If he can describe my studio, and tell me the name of the man who sat for me yesterday (one of our models), I will believe in him."

"Ah, if he can do that now, it will be extraordinary indeed," said Lord H——.

"On second thoughts," I said, "I shouldn't think much of his description of the room, because all artists' studios are much alike; but if he names the model I will believe."

"Well, try him," said my lord.

"No," said I, "you put it to him."

At the moment Tawell was lying back in an exhausted condition, Sothern standing by him.

Said Lord H——, "Can the gentleman describe Mr. Frith's studio, and name the man who sat for him yesterday?"

Sothern made several passes, and they produced a slow, but accurate, description of the painting-room.

"Is that right?" said my lord.

"Yes," said I; "but he can't name the model. It is impossible. The name is" (in a whisper to Lord H——) "Harrel."

"Frith says the room is right, but how about the model—can he tell us the name?"

Tawell was very exhausted. Sothern tried passes, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, but the medium gave no sound. At last the operator said,

"I fear my friend is too exhausted."

"There," said I, "I told you the whole thing is humbug."

"Wait," we heard Sothern say, as he leaned his ear close to Tawell. "Can you name the man who sat to Frith yesterday?"

Tawell muttered something we could not hear. Sothern, with his ear still closer to Tawell, said,

"What? Can't you speak a little louder?"

Some more passes and the mesmerized man seemed to be revived into sudden strength again, and in a clear voice said, "Harrel."

I think I acted my astonishment very well, and I am quite sure the young lords turned as white as ghosts: the idea that the whole thing was prearranged before dinner never entered their minds. I believe both those gentlemen are still living, and if by chance they should read these lines they will know how it was that Tawell knew "who sat for Frith yesterday."

A Mrs. Marshall was a celebrated medium. She was generally accompanied by a young woman she called her niece when she gave—or, rather, sold—her services at different houses. At one of her performances I was present, and some strange tricks were played. This time I was not a confederate, but a pretended believer, and one of a large party sitting round a table at a friend's house. There were some ladies who wore large crinolines ; and when the younger Marshall put a candle under the table to enable the spirit to see to put some coins into a tumbler which was placed there for the purpose, after hearing one or two pieces of money dropped into the glass, I, without really wishing to discover anything of the trick, looked beneath the table to see if the candle was at a safe distance from the crinolines, when I saw the younger cheat moving the coins with her feet towards the tumbler. She had put off her slippers, and her naked toes were apparent as she used them like fingers, and with extraordinary cleverness, for among the coins was a fourpenny-piece—a difficult thing to move about with one's toes.

Mrs. Marshall gave *séances* at her own house to all and sundry who were willing to pay five shillings for the amusement, and Sothern, hearing of the elderly medium, went with a friend—Toole, I think it was—paid his five shillings, and gravely took his place at the table. He became greatly awe-stricken at the various manifestations. His excitement and terror became very serious, and at last culminated in a convulsive fit. He foamed at the mouth (by the help of a piece of soap), rolled on the ground, and bit the old woman in the leg.

A more serious and less defensible practical joke was played by Sothern in the following manner. He was acting in a piece—the name of which he mentioned when he told me the story, but I forget it—when he noticed a lady and gentleman sitting alone in the stage-box. The lady was handsome. The gentleman, somewhat her senior, seldom spoke to his companion ; indeed, they appeared an ill-assorted couple. Sothern's familiar demon was in full power, and when in the course of the play he had to quit the stage for a time, he wrote a note and sent it to the lady, containing, as well as I can recollect, these words :

"Beloved one! Now and ever beloved! Can it be true that you are married? Is the man with you your husband? Little dreamed I when I came to the theatre that I should see one so inexpressibly dear to me in the possession of another. Can he know—can you have forgotten all that has passed between us? I dare not sign this with my name. *You know it*, and I implore you to let me see you once more, and hear from your own lips that you are lost to me forever. Write to the club, as usual."

Sothern told me he returned to the stage and continued his part, with an eye on the lady just as she received his note. She read it, or the greater part of it, and hastily thrust it into her pocket. Her saturnine companion insisted on seeing it. The lady hesitated, then flatly refused. The gentleman persisted and the note was produced.

"I assure you," said Sothern, "the man's expression would have been a study for you. Talk of looking daggers—he looked broadswords. I am sorry to say I couldn't hear what he said, but I saw what he did; he jumped up and rushed out of the box, taking the lady with him, and I saw no more of 'em."

The above is a pretty clear proof that when the love of practical joking takes possession of a man he may indulge it in a manner that is unjustifiable. Another instance admits of defence. The actor was very fond of marmalade, and had ordered rather a large quantity at a shop. When the marmalade was delivered it was found to be faulty in many respects, and Sothern went to the shop and demanded back the money he had paid for it. The shopkeeper refused, upon which Sothern put an advertisement in two newspapers, announcing that orange-peel in any quantity that may be found at music-halls, theatres, or at other places of private or public resort where oranges are a favorite fruit, will be purchased at the best price by So-and-So, at their well-known establishment at Blank Place.

It will surprise no one that practical joking, however agreeable to the performer, is so little satisfactory to the victims of it that an angry feeling is set up, costing the joker many a friend. A notable example of this occurred at Sothern's table on an occasion when, as he said, "he had got them all into a state of mind to believe anything." The spirits were present and very demonstrative, table-movements and spectral effects were plentiful, when the company were surprised by an announcement that the spirit of Sheridan was present, and he would like a glass of wine! This was too much for Sothern, who exclaimed,

"Some one is playing a trick; we all know Sheridan's habits, but it is absurd to suppose that he retains his propensities in a disembodied condition. I must really ask that no one will attempt to trifle in this way."

The spirits were again appealed to, and the ghost of Sheridan rapped loudly and angrily, again demanding a glass of wine.

"Well," said Sothern, "this is very strange," filling a glass full of champagne. "Now, to see that no trick is played, do you," speaking to Tawell, who sat next to him, "place yourself beneath the table, and tell the company what takes place."

Tawell slipped under the table, Sothern held the wine below, and Tawell drank it.

The effect on the company when the empty glass appeared, and Tawell's frightened face with it, was electric. A chorus of grateful raps from Sheridan closed that scene, leaving the audience in what Sothern called "exactly the right condition for further operations."

To prove how a friend may be hurt and lost I may add that among the guests was an old friend of Sothern's——heretofore a sceptic, but on this occasion an enthusiastic believer—who had recently lost his mother. The spirit of the departed was present, and the raps announced that if her son would put his hand beneath the table the hand of the dead would touch it. Near the chair of the actor was some iced water; his naked toes were plunged into it and applied to the believer's hand for a moment, but long enough to produce a startling effect. Then the victim turned pale, the tears started to his eyes, and he fell back sobbing in his chair. The trick was discovered some time afterwards, and the spiritualist lost his friend—and no wonder!

Sothern told me a curious circumstance in connection with the play of "The American Cousin," originally produced in New York, the principal part being filled by Jefferson, whose admirable acting made it, or was intended to have made it, the chief part of the play. Sothern—

then acting in the name of Stewart—was cast for the insignificant part of Lord Dundreary, much to his disgust. He had other reasons for dislike to the management, and he now determined to revenge himself by making the foolish lord supremely ridiculous. Among the properties he discovered a preposterous dressing-gown. He practised a way of walking, or, rather, skipping about, unlike the locomotion of any creature out of Bedlam. He invented a drawl equally unnatural, and, armed with these weapons, he hoped to damn the piece. To his utter astonishment, the means he had adopted to ruin the play insured its success, and from that moment Lord Dundreary became its most attractive character. I saw the play several times in London, and on each occasion the actor varied the part by the introduction of allusions, in a Dundreary spirit, to events of the moment, or in what is called "gagging," to any extent. If he found his gag tell upon the audience he repeated it; if not he changed it for another. On one occasion he told me that, discovering the young lady in the play immersed in a book, and apparently surprised by its contents, he inquired in Dundreary tones what she was reading. The young lady replied that the book was one of Chinese travels, and the writer asserted that criminals condemned to death in China could, by a money-payment, procure substitutes who underwent the punishment for them.

"Can this be true?" asked the young lady.

"Perfectly," said Dundreary. "My brother Sam is intimately acquainted with some of the Chinese who get their living by it."

This, Sothern told me, he thought would have "told" with the audience—and I confess I should have thought so too; but except an old gentleman in the stalls, who let off a laugh like a loud bark, "there was not a smile among them," and the Chinese joke was never repeated.

I hesitate in any allusion to living people, actors or others. I think I may boast that I have an acquaintance, more or less intimate, with most of the best actors of the present day, and I have the satisfaction of feeling that I was one of the first to foretell the great fame that has been so deservedly won by my friend Irving; and, curiously enough, I may say the same as regards Miss Ellen Terry, in whose performance—almost *en amateur*—many years ago, I discovered, or thought I did, germs of the genius since so apparent to all the world. But I feel it is time to return to a less congenial subject, namely, myself and my own doings, and I find that I am again "in trouble" in respect of *subject.*

The remainder of the year 1867 was taken up by the execution of small matters, with the exception of one picture from "She Stoops to Conquer;" the scene chosen being that in which Mrs. Hardcastle desires her cub of a son to stand back to back with Miss Neville to see which is the taller, a position of which Tony takes advantage to bestow a blow upon the lady's head with his own thick skull, to her discomfiture and his mother's disgust. The picture contains four figures, the third being Mr. Hastings, the lover of Miss Neville. The subject is a good one of its class, but far wide of what I desired to illustrate. The picture was pretty successful, and is now in the collection of Mr. Matthews. This, with a portrait and a small subject from Sterne, occupied me till, on reading, or, rather, rereading, Boswell's "Johnson," I found a scene that might be sufficiently interesting to repay its reproduction, containing, as it does, so many historical and eminent characters. The locality is Boswell's lodgings in Bond Street, and the persons present are Boswell, Johnson, Garrick, Murphy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith, and others. The guests are assembled before dinner, waiting for one who is, *à la* Landseer, belated. Boswell asks, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?" "Why, yes," replies Johnson, "if the one will suffer more by your sitting down than the six will do by waiting."

In the interval of waiting, Garrick is described as holding the lapels of Johnson's coat, the sage looking down upon him with tender interest. As there was nearly the difference of a foot in the height of the two men, Johnson must have regarded the actor from a physical as well as a moral elevation sufficiently striking, and though I took especial pains to ascertain the precise height of the two figures, and placed them on the canvas in their true relation to each other, I was told by a critic who had, most probably, never given two thoughts to the matter, that "Johnson was too tall." Boswell sat with watch in hand, while Goldsmith posed before the mirror in all the splendor of the celebrated plum-colored coat. Now came the dreadful model grievance—the real people were gone, and the substitutes difficult, in some cases impossible, to obtain. Excellent authorities in the way of busts and portraits were plentiful, but to find any one with the least resemblance to Garrick or Johnson was a puzzle indeed. Nollekens' portrait-bust of Johnson was of great service; it is full of character, and evidently a striking likeness, but much damaged by a flowing head of hair—an ornament impossible to Johnson or anybody else who habitually wore a wig. Johnson remonstrated with the sculptor, and insisted that not only should the wig have been represented, but the coat and neckcloth also, instead of the flowing locks and a sort of towel or other drapery encircling the neck, according to the classic taste of the day. I think the Doctor was right, but Nollekens did not, and positively refused to make the change, for several reasons; one being that "he had paid a man eighteenpence to sit for the hair, and he was not going to that expense for nothing." Nollekens was a miser, and in other respects an oddity. Mulready, who remembered calling on him to express his acknowledgment for a vote that the sculptor may, or may not, have given him, on his election as an associate, described the sculptor and his workshop to me—the former as a little thin-lipped, mean-looking creature; the latter as filled with casts of admirable quality. Among them Nollekens showed the young painter a bust, or "busto," as he called it, of Yorick, otherwise Sterne.

"Yes, that's Yorick's busto that I done (*sic*) in Rome. And that—oh, that's just a bit of accidental natur," alluding to a lovely female figure which had attracted Mulready's admiration.

Pictures were *picturs* and nature was *natur* in the Nollekens times. I don't suppose Reynolds ever said *picture* in his life.

Landseer had a story of Nollekens worth repeating. George IV., when Prince of Wales, sat to Nollekens for his bust, which was being finished, in marble. The sculptor was working close to his model, when a little marble-dust found its way to the collar of the prince's coat. Nollekens blew it off, and in the same breath said to the prince:

"How's your father?"

The king was just recovering from a long illness.

"Thank you, Mr. Nollekens, he is much better."

"Ah! that's all right!" said Nollekens. "It would be a sad thing if he was to die, for we shall never have another king like him."

"Thank you," said the prince.

"Ah, sir! you may depend upon that."

But I am drifting away from my picture and the difficulties of it. After many trials from a variety of models, I succeeded in getting a tolerable resemblance to the various personages, as we know them from prints and pictures, and it was not till after the picture was in the exhibition, unfortunately, that I found I might have secured an excellent model for Garrick. And thus the matter fell out: My friend Mr. Cundall, the manager of the Stafford Place branch of the London and Westminster Bank, received a visit from a stranger on a matter of business connected with the bank. The moment the gentleman entered the manager's private room his extraordinary resemblance to Garrick so struck Cundall that my picture instantly came into his mind, together with a regret that it was too late for me to avail myself of so valuable a model. After some talk, the business, whatever it may have been, was concluded, and it was necessary for the stranger to give his name, and the manager's surprise may be imagined when he found it was—Garrick. His astonishment was so evident that Mr. Garrick asked the cause of it. This was explained, when the stranger said:

"Well, the likeness is easily accounted for, for my grandfather was Garrick's brother."

The female element, considered justly an important factor in all pictures, was conspicuous by its absence from the company assembled at Boswell's lodgings in Bond Street, or only on evidence in the form of a pretty servant-girl, who was represented as announcing the late arrival. I think I may boast that having painted so many pretty women, I had acquired a reputation for the feat, and it was a great objection to the "Garrick" picture, both on my own part and that of my friends, that the conditions of the subject debarred me from the advantage that the introduction of the most charming portion of humanity would have afforded me. Many were the predictions that the picture "would never sell," a feeling strongly shared by Mr. Agnew, who bought it from me for, I think, twelve hundred pounds.

"It is a capital picture!" said that eminent authority; "but we shall have to keep it, Frith."

That "you should never prophesy unless you know," was very fully proved in this case, for the picture changed hands at the private view, and became the property of Mr. Mendell, of Manchester, at whose death, some years afterwards, the picture was sold at Christie's for four thousand five hundred and sixty-seven pounds ten shillings, being the largest price that had been paid for the work of a living artist at that time.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"THE SALON D'OR."

In the Exhibition of 1868 I was represented by five pictures, namely, the scene from Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," the "Johnson and Garrick" subject, and three minor works, one of which represented Sterne's "Maria," so pathetically described in the pages of that writer, sitting, with wandering mind, "a look of wistful disorder," her flageolet in her hand, and her goat by her side. Never shall I forget that goat! It was fortunate that I got a strong man to hold it; fortunate, also, that my picture was not destroyed, and myself injured. For the animal violently objected to being painted: it knocked the man over, and butted him as he lay upon the floor; then turned its attention to me, and endeavored to treat me in the same way. I received its first charge on my mahl-stick, which snapped in my defence. My assistant recaptured the brute just as my easel, fortunately a very strong one, was made the means of experiment to try whether the goat's head or the mahogany was the harder; and again he—or *she*, I think it was (females are generally vicious—*female goats*, I mean)—was seized by the horns, and her head bent towards the floor. And now began a series of struggles in which man and goat were mixed together like the Old Guard and our soldiers at Waterloo. For one moment the man had the best of it, and the goat was quiet; then, watching its opportunity, a violent plunge was made, and the man seemed to fly towards the ceiling, then down on his back again, and the butting recommenced.

It was now necessary to get more assistance, and I sent for one of my sons, a sturdy lad, who delighted in the business. After that we got or better, and I succeeded in painting an animal which, strange to say, is not unlike a goat.

The picture of Sterne's "Maria" is now in the possession of one of the brothers Burnand. The two Burnands are specimens of the very best kind of picture-collectors; men of great taste and judgment—though they certainly admired and sometimes bought my pictures: "*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*" ('tis long since I showed my classical knowledge); men who collected works of art from love of them, and of exceptional liberality, and without a thought of the mercantile element which so often guides the picture-buyer. Both these gentlemen possessed, and, I am happy to say, still possess, admirable specimens of many of our best artists.

The model for "Maria" was a pretty, gentle creature, who had a history. She sat to me many times for many pictures; and it was her sad expression as much as her beauty that suggested "Maria" to me, and induced me to try the subject. I drew from her—reluctantly on her side—something of her history. Her superiority to an ordinary model was apparent in many ways; her manner and address were ladylike, and her grammar never caused a shudder. I knew of her mother as being "one who had seen better days," but was not aware that my model possessed a husband, until one day when, seeing palpable evidence of recent tears, and, among other distressing symptoms, something very like the mark of a recent blow, she told me she had been married for some time, and to a wretch who treated her with brutality. The man sought her acquaintance (he was a journeyman something or other, with a tolerable education), and, finding she was a Sunday-school teacher, he professed an ardent desire to join in the good work. She reluctantly consented to his seeing her home, and making the acquaintance of her mother, who very soon saw through the man, and cautioned her daughter against him. But the fellow was clever enough to find out the girl's weaknesses and pander to them. He was very assiduous at the Sunday-school, affected a veneration for religion and its observances, praised her beauty and helped her to adorn it—in short, won her heart and her consent to marry him. This last fatal step, in spite of her mother's entreaties, she persisted in taking, and within a month afterwards the hypocrite dropped his mask, ridiculed the religion in which she sincerely believed, deserted her for others, came home occasionally mad-drunk, beat her, and would soon have killed her if she had not taken advice and left him. She hid herself successfully for some time, when, on coming to me one day to sit, I saw, before she spoke, that her retreat had been discovered. The man demanded money, and got it, but left her otherwise undisturbed. He informed her, with coarse language, that she needn't fear his wanting to live with her again, he had had enough of her and her tempers; but so long as she earned money—he didn't care how—he intended to have a share of it.

Soon after this my lovely "Maria" disappeared more effectually from my knowledge than she had done from her husband's. I regretted her loss, and made many unavailing inquiries after her—all in vain. I never saw her again but once, and then she was lounging in a splendid carriage, with some children, which, from the hasty glance I had of them, seemed greatly to resemble herself; but whether her husband is dead and she is married again, or whether she is not married again and her husband is not dead, this deponent knoweth not; but he heartily wishes her well wherever or whatever she may be—only reminding her that she has been rather late in coming to keep an appointment to enable him to finish a head begun nearly twenty years ago.

This dilatoriness reminds me of a story told of a sailor who took the opportunity of deserting from his ship on the occasion of his being sent ashore at some island to fetch some fruit for his captain. Fifteen years afterwards the sailor was looking into a print-shop in London, and, turning away to resume his walk, he found himself face to face with his deserted captain. After a look of mutual recognition and astonishment, mixed, on the sailor's part, with a considerable portion of alarm, the captain merely remarked, "You have been a long time getting that fruit!"

My first sight of Boswell and his friends on the Academy walls shocked me as usual. My diary says:

"To the R.A. Pictures well placed, and looking well—all but Johnson, which is hung too low, and looks dingy."

Dingy though it seemed to me, it was much approved, to my surprise; and, to this moment, I cannot account for its success, nor for the ridiculous price that was afterwards paid for it.

I suppose few people in public positions escape the cowardly pest of anonymous letters. Dickens told me that he received so many as to produce a habit of never reading any letter till he first ascertained if there was a name at the bottom of it. If the missive was unsigned, into the fire it went. I never was favored in that way but once—when the "Boswell" picture was exhibited. I think the epistle emanated from a disappointed artist, for there was an ass's head on it very well drawn, and between the donkey's ears were my initials, "W.P.F."

"That's what you are," said the author; "and the sooner you go to school again, and learn to draw, the better it will be for the exhibition, as you will not disgrace it as you do now."

It was my habit in those days to read the "art criticisms" in the papers, and, as the unfavorable ones were always sent to me, I had a good deal of reading. In one journal (the *Saturday Review*, I think) one of my larger pictures was severely handled. The paper was sent to me with the most scathing remarks underlined in lead-pencil; with pencilled remarks in the margin calling my attention to the critic's observations in such phrases as:

"There you've got it!" "How do you like that?" "That's a nasty one, ain't it?" and so on.

I dare say many such playful attacks have been made upon me since. If so, I hereby advertise the performers that they may save themselves trouble; for, as I have said before, I never read a word of art criticism, either about myself or others.

My next venture was in the field of "modern life." I do not remember the subject of it with satisfaction, or write about it with pleasure; though I and my friends thought well of it at the time of its conception. My idea was to represent two scenes (a double picture). In the first, a young gentleman is asking an elderly one for his consent to a marriage with his daughter. In the second, the young lady is waiting—sympathetically supported by her mother—in great trepidation for the result of the interview. The pictures were placed in one frame, and called "Hope" and "Fear." I cannot say they were successful—the subject was considered to belong to the "namby-pamby" school—with considerable justice, I fear. They found a purchaser, however, in a Mr. X——, who was a great lover of art, without being much acquainted with its mysteries. He was a very hospitable, pleasant gentleman, with a charming country-house—to which I paid several visits. Mr. X—— had a habit of thinking aloud, which (like a similar propensity in Lord Dudley and Ward) was often the cause of amusement and embarrassment to his friends and himself.

On one of my visits from Saturday to Monday, I went to church with my host. X——'s house was some mile and a half from his place of worship, and he drove me there in a double-bodied kind of phaeton—the front seat made to hold two persons, with a smaller seat behind for a servant. We had reached within half a mile of the church, when a lady was seen walking along the road.

"Confound it!" said X—— (to *himself*, as he imagined), "that's Mrs. Smith. It will never do to pass her. The man must drive her to church—confound her!" Then to me: "You see that lady walking along there? She is a particular friend of ours, and evidently going to church. I think we must offer her the carriage. Would you mind walking the rest of the way?"

"On the contrary," said I, "I should like it."

Almost as I spoke the carriage stopped by the lady's side. The usual "She would, and she would not," took place, ending in Mrs. Smith seating herself by the groom's side, and being carefully wrapped up by Mr. X—— in a fur rug. As X—— was tenderly covering up the lady's knees, he said:

"Sha'n't take her back, though. She is as well able to walk as we are."

Fortunately Mrs. Smith was well acquainted with X——'s infirmity. She smiled an acknowledgment of his politeness; and she certainly walked home.

On another occasion, a large and distinguished company was assembled in X——'s drawing-room, after one of the sumptuous dinners for which he was celebrated. The walls were covered with pictures, the merits of which were freely discussed by the guests. I saw X——, with one of his guests, discussing the qualities of a picture, as was evident by frequent pointing on the part of the connoisseur to portions of the work.

The guest had to catch a train; and he had no sooner left the room than, in the midst of a momentary stillness, X—— exclaimed, in a loud voice, "I don't care a d—n what he thinks!" Then, to me, "Frith, do you think there is a want of breadth throughout this picture? My friend So-and-So says it is dreadfully 'cut up.'"

I may here relate another instance of thinking aloud that was told me by Vice-chancellor Wigram:

Sir James Wigram was a guest at one of the state balls given in the days of William IV., and during the evening he found himself close to Queen Adelaide, who was in conversation with Lord Dudley and Ward. The queen had evidently been pestered with questions, and was in an irritable state—a condition, I believe, not uncommon with her. Just as Wigram reached the pair, Lord Dudley asked a question. "I have answered that question twice already," said the queen.

"D—n her!—so she has!" *thought* Lord Dudley, and *said* it aloud.

As the pictures of "Hope" and "Fear" progressed I was beset with doubts of their success. My diary says, on the 29th of July: "Upper part of mother's dress worked miserably; doubtful of these subjects; they are weak, I fear." I think the pictures were sold separately eventually—a sure sign of failure; for if a story is well told, and of sufficient interest in a series of pictures—as in Hogarth, for instance—no one would dream of selling them separately.

About this time an exhibition took place at York. A copy, on a small scale, of the Great Exhibition of 1851; pictures, chiefly old masters, playing a prominent part in it. And never was the ignorance of the public in general, and of the owners of the pictures in particular, more ludicrously displayed.

A London doctor had formed a large collection of daubs, to which he had attached great names, in happy ignorance of the special qualities for which the painters were distinguished. So he had a crucifixion, by Ostade; a comic scene of characters dressed in the costume of the time of George I., by Rubens, and so on. And what was stranger, was the fact that the exhibition authorities had agreed in the estimate of the enormous value of these gems, as appraised by their owner, to the extent of paying large sums in the way of insurance. Query—would an insurance office be compelled to pay for the destruction by fire (a fate richly deserved) of a George III. Rubens, if evidence were forthcoming to prove the absurdity of its affiliation?

Never was a more assiduous student during the whole of his life than William Etty, R.A. Never, so long as his health lasted, did he miss a single night at the Life School, where his studies from the nude were the wonder and admiration of his fellow-students, young and old. Well do I remember the last he made at Somerset House. It was done from a stalwart life-guardsman, and on a pedestal partly supporting the figure was written, "*Dulce dulce domum vale!*"

The Academy migrated to Trafalgar Square in 1837; and there Etty resumed the work that—as I heard him say—made his life "a long summer's holiday." The journey up-stairs to the pepper-box tried the old man sorely; and many a time did I find him standing, when half-way up the ascent, recovering his breath, and looking enviously—if his gentle nature was capable of such a feeling—at the alert way in which we boys used to slip past him into the school.

My student-days began in Trafalgar Square, where I was the very first to enter my name in the probationers' book, and where, from 1837 to 1869, the most successful, and consequently the happiest, part of my life was spent.

Apropos of Somerset House, I may relate a story that I heard of the great room there, the scene of the exhibition of all the great English pictures, from Sir Joshua downwards. Round the walls was a wooden dado of such ancient construction that it had to be removed, and the whole room altered, for the occupation of the new tenants when it was changed into a government office, as it now exists.

The dado had been so constructed as to leave a narrow space between it and the wall; and, on its removal, great numbers of empty purses, of ancient and modern make, were revealed—eloquent of successful pocket-picking and of the cleverness of the thieves in rapidly disposing of recognizable evidence.

I am sorry to say I cannot give a satisfactory account of my first appearance at Burlington House, where our first exhibition took place in 1869. So sure were those in authority that the splendid galleries could not be filled with presentable pictures, that a vacant space was left round every exhibit—greatly to the advantage of each work, but the cause of the rejection of many meritorious pictures.

Times change, and we with them. That arrangement was never repeated; and at this time, 1887, good works are rejected from want of space.

My contributions were, besides "Hope" and "Fear," a "Scene from 'Don Quixote,'" where the crazy knight finds the damsel Altisidora lying in the arms of a friend, in a pretended faint for love of him; fully believing in the lady's passion, he requests her friend (who declares the love-lorn damsel will not recover while the Don is by) to have a lute placed in his chamber, so that he may comfort her.

In my second picture I had an admirable subject, of its class, which I found in a work by Dr. Doran, where Nell Gwynne is described as selling oranges to the gallants and their ladies at the King's or the Duke's Theatre, and treating them to many a witty repartee, as well as oranges, in exchange for money and wit, readily offered.

My other contribution was a portrait of a friend. I changed his broadcloth into steel, and called him "A Man in Armor." The picture proved so strong a likeness that my friend was stopped in the street, questioned in omnibuses, and received other proofs of his identity with the picture, which was, and is, one of my best.

I had been so accustomed to compliments on my pictures from my brother artists, on the varnishing and private-view days, that my disappointment was very painful when I found this year's contributions received in silence. What could be the cause? I could not accuse myself of idleness or carelessness. My feelings may be imagined by the following from my diary:

"*Friday, April* 20.—Private view—never was I so dispirited. My pictures don't seem cared for, and I cannot understand it; I suppose I am going wrong."

The pictures were bought by Messrs. Agnew, and sold again at a profit, I hope; but this I found but a poor consolation. In endeavoring to discover the causes of comparative failure, a proceeding I recommend to the young and the old painter, a strict survey should be made of the general conduct of work, and a decision arrived at as to whether the best efforts of the painter have been exercised in the production of his less successful pictures. I cannot accuse myself of carelessness, but I think I did too much, for I find that not only were three elaborate compositions painted in one year, but that I have to credit, or discredit, the year with the "Man in Armor," and also an elaborate little picture from "Twelfth Night," being the scene in which Sir Toby, Maria, Aguecheek, and Fabian are watching Malvolio as he soliloquizes in the sun.

My diary says: "Try to do better; get newer subjects—all depends on subject."

The subject difficulty is apparent enough, for I find myself next employed on the well-worn character of Sir Roger de Coverley and the beautiful widow, a commission from my eccentric friend Mr. X——; and on a still more "used-up" theme, the well-known glove-shop episode in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey." I confess the "Grisette's Pulse" had afforded me a subject for one of my first attempts, now to be seen in the Jones Collection at South Kensington. This picture was exhibited at the British Institution, where no one asked the price of it. I then sent it to Birmingham, where it was sold for thirty pounds. In due time the picture appeared at Christie's, where it was sold for six hundred guineas. My second treatment of the Sterne was changed, and so was the price I received for it, for, instead of thirty pounds, I received nine hundred from Mr. Coope, in whose collection it still remains.

It was at this time that the idea seized me of a famous modern-life subject, which I put down in rough pen-and-ink scratches, and afterwards developed into the series called "The Road to Ruin." I had been to Ascot, and been greatly struck by the legalized gambling on that famous race-course, feeling greatly puzzled, like so many of my fellow-creatures, to reconcile with the justice that we are taught to feel should always accompany law, the fact that men may do with impunity in one place what they are severely punished for if they do it in another. If men meet in Hyde Park for the purpose of betting, and are caught in the act, imprisonment will surely follow, though the stakes may only consist of a few shillings. In the Royal Enclosure at Ascot the "curled darlings of the nation" may sacrifice their maternal acres to any extent without the fear of the law.

I remember asking a man learned in the law to explain this anomaly, and he acknowledged his inability, at the same time inquiring whether I was aware that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor.

With a view to the first of "The Road to Ruin" series I went to Cambridge, where I saw a variety of students' rooms, of which photographs were taken; these proved of great service in the carrying-out of the pictures—an operation which circumstances caused to be deferred for several years. On a visit to Baden in the year 1843 the gaming-tables were in full blast, and I remember feeling a strong desire to strike out a picture from them; but the subject appeared to me too difficult to be undertaken without much more experience than I had had at that time. When I found that my friend O'Neil was bent on a journey to Homburg, and I found also the tables were to be finally closed in two years from the year I am dealing with — 1869 — I felt it must be "now or never," if there was a chance for a true representation of the scene to be made. Accordingly to Homburg I travelled, and the following extract from a letter to my sister will give an idea of the first impression made upon me by the gamblers and their surroundings:

> "My first sight of the clustering crowd round the tables shocked me exceedingly. Instead of the noisy, eager gamblers I expected to see, I found a quiet, business-like, unimpressionable set of people trying to get money without working for it—some, perhaps, playing to gratify the excitement of the gambling spirit, and indifferent as to the result, but the motive of the majority appeared to me a vulgar greediness after the stakes. Quite time, I thought, that a stop should be put to this, and a stop has been put to it. But how about Ascot? Is England contented to be behind Germany in tolerating an exhibition even more demoralizing than the gambling-rooms at Homburg? I confess to a love of gambling, though I deny altogether the disposition to make money by it, and, shocked though I felt at the crowd round the tables in the Salon d'Or, I very soon made one among them—see the demoralizing effect!—but, as I never staked gold, I gratified my excitement without much risk. Great numbers of thalers I won, and, as I continued gambling, I lost them all as a matter of course.
>
> "'*Soyez content d'un peu*,' said the good-natured croupier."

I did better, for I bade adieu to the tables altogether, and amused myself by studying the people with a view to the picture, which afterwards appeared at Burlington House under the title of "The Salon d'Or." The picture was so popular as to require the protection of a rail, and I can truly say in its favor that, whatever may be its merits or demerits as a picture, it is a strictly true representation of a scene passed away forever—a painful, even a degrading scene if you will, but one well deserving record as an example of legalized indulgence in one of the bad passions of human nature. The picture was bought by a Mr. Roffey, with a view to the publication of an engraving. An engraver was engaged—a man of some eminence when the subject was a dog or a horse, but whose experience in respect of the human animal was so slight that he was quite at sea in his attempts to reproduce my unfortunate gamblers. I doubt if a worse print was ever made from a figure picture since the art of engraving was discovered, and the failure was complete.

Homburg was the innocent, or wicked, cause of another small artistic effort of mine. It was not very uncommon to see ladies sitting among the orange-trees smoking cigarettes. I was attracted to one—a very pretty one—whose efforts to light her cigarette being unavailing, called to a waiter for a light. A candle was brought, and as the fair smoker stooped to it she presented such a pretty figure, and altogether so paintable an appearance, that I could not resist a momentary sketch, afterwards elaborated into a small picture. I think Hogarth would have made a picture of such an incident, with the addition, perhaps, of matter unpresentable to the present age. It might have adorned our National Gallery, while I was mercilessly attacked for painting such a subject at all. I knew very well that if I or any other painter dared to introduce certain incidents (such as bristle over Hogarth's works) into our pictures, they would have no chance of shocking the public that admires the Hogarths on the walls in Trafalgar Square, for the Council of the Royal Academy would prevent any such catastrophe.

Before I take leave of Homburg, I may add, for the information of the student, that to insure the verisimilitude of the scene of the "Salon d'Or" I had large photographs made of the room. I am at this moment writing in one of the chairs from the gaming-table. I secured one of the croupier's rakes and empty rouleau-cases, with other material necessary for my work; I also sought, and found, models for every figure. I cannot call attention too often to the absolute necessity for taking full advantage of the assistance that preliminary care affords in every work of art.

I had nearly forgotten an incident connected with the "Salon d'Or" picture that may amuse. In the immediate foreground sits a *roué* who turns to a lady standing by him, with whom he seems to have tender relations, and places in her hand some bank-notes, evidently—from his smiling countenance—the result of his winnings. The lady receives the money, but whether for the purpose of risking it again or not, does not appear. The model for the lady was a handsome dark girl whose name I forget. She was rather a stupid person, as what I am about to relate will prove. The figure was about half-finished, when my model suddenly announced her approaching marriage.

"I congratulate you," said I. "When is it to be?"

"Next Wednesday."

"Been long engaged?" inquired I.

"No, sir. I've no engagements after to-day."

"That's not what I mean. How long have you known your intended husband?"

"About a month."

"What is he?"

"Don't know."

"Good gracious! Do you know you are going to run a terrible risk?"

"All weddings is risks," replied my philosopher.

Then came the withering idea over me that the husband might refuse to let his wife sit; and if that should be, where was I? So I gravely recommenced the conversation.

"Now, you know, when an artist begins a picture from a particular person" ("Not that you are such a very particular person," thought I), "it is absolutely necessary he should finish it from the model from whom he has begun his work. I do hope you will not do me the injury of not giving me the opportunity of finishing what I have begun from you. You will sit for me after your marriage, won't you?"

"Oh, yes. I told him I wouldn't have him if I was to give up sitting."

"That's right! Well, then, when can you come to see me again?"

"Well, I can't exactly say, because I have promised to sit for young this, and young that, after we come back from Margate."

"I thought you said you had no engagements!"

"Ah, I meant before Wednesday."

"Suppose we say this day month," I proposed.

"Right you are," said my model. "This day month I'll be here."

As I heard nothing in the interval, it was with some trepidation that I prepared for my sitter on the appointed day; and it was with much satisfaction that, as the clock struck ten, I saw the lady walk into my studio. We got to work immediately, and I found the model—never very talkative—more gloomy than ever.

"Well," said I, after a while, "how do you like married life? I hope you are happy. How does the husband turn out?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's that jealous—"

"Jealous!" echoed I.

"Yes, sir. He bothers my life out with his questions. He always wants to know where I been, what I done, what the artists says to me, and all like that. He torments me dreadful."

"Jealous!" I repeated. "Not jealous of the artists you sit to?"

"Yes; he is downright jealous of every one of 'em!"

"Well," said I, "he will be all right to-night, at all events, for he knew you were coming here. He won't be jealous of me, I suppose?"

"Oh, no," said the candid young person. "It's the young ones he's jealous of. He don't mind how many old gents like you I sit to."

My contributions to the Exhibition of 1871 were the "Salon d'Or," a scene from "Kenilworth," a half-length figure of Gabrielle d'Estrée, and some smaller matter. The "Kenilworth" subject contained two figures—Amy Robsart and her maid Janet, who was represented adorning her mistress previous to one of Leicester's visits to Cumnor Place. The model for Amy Robsart was the ill-starred Mrs. Rousby—a most beautiful creature—who may be remembered by many of my readers as an actress of merit, whose career, so full of bright promise, was brought to a sad close by her early death. I knew her before she appeared upon the stage, and those who saw her afterwards—lovely as she was—can have but a faint idea of her extraordinary beauty as a young girl. Whatever the cause may have been—before illness drove her from public life—her beauty had faded to such an extent as to throw doubt upon those who asserted her claims to supreme loveliness before she entered upon the stage life. I shall never forget the vision of beauty that burst upon us when she entered the drawing-room at Pembridge Villas on her first visit here.

I painted her in the character of Queen, or rather Princess, Elizabeth, in Tom Taylor's play "'Twixt Axe and Crown." In spite of repeated efforts the beauty quite escaped me, though in other respects the picture was like. As some one said of Wilkie (who had no appreciation of female beauty), "He has made his portrait of Lady Blank" (a great beauty) "very like, barring her beauty, which he has left out altogether."

I think I may say that Amy Robsart, as represented in my "Kenilworth" picture, was a pretty creature not unlike my model; and though not so lovely, a good deal of her beauty was displayed. If these lines should meet the eye of the owner of the picture—an unknown quantity to me—he may be pleased to know these details about it.

My diary for May 1, 1871, says:

"To R.A., where, to my great delight, I find what I expected, and even more. Such a crowd as I have not seen since the 'Derby Day,' and a policeman to protect the picture. In all probability a rail must be put."

And on May 3 I find:

"This morning sees a rail put to my picture. This is the fourth railed-in and railed-at picture—and this without my stir. Now to try again."

No one could feel the invidious nature of the special mark of popularity that a rail round a picture implied more than I did, and often and often did I beg the Academy, in conclave assembled, to consent to the placing of rails round all the rooms, and again and again I was defeated. The delight of the solitary rail triumph is now gone forever, for the long-deferred protection is afforded now in every gallery; and what opened Academic eyes to the necessity for it was the injury done by some malicious person to the pictures in the Exhibition of 1886. Cuts and scratches, nearly always about three feet from the ground, were plentifully bestowed on several pictures, apparently by some instrument easily held close to the pictures as the perpetrator of the mischief walked past them. This little amusement will now be difficult, if not impossible, for any one to indulge in without the risk of immediate detection.

Strange to say, a similar performance was enacted in or about the year 1843. The injuries were inflicted upon pictures by wounds almost identical with those of 1886—the same distance from the floor, and of the same character. Some of them, however, were more serious than those of 1886, notably in one instance of a very beautiful small "Portrait of a Gentleman," by Corbet, of Shrewsbury—a well-known excellent painter of small, highly-finished portraits. The eyes in the picture were destroyed by cutting them down to the panel on which the portrait was painted. The criminal was never discovered, but it was observed by that born joker, Charles Landseer, that the destroyer of the eyes in Corbet's picture was most likely a schoolmaster in want of *pupils!* "Another such joke as that, and we will all vote for your expulsion," said one of a group of academicians standing by.

I cannot refrain from staining my paper with another of C. L.'s perpetrations. A picture was exhibited of a parting between two lovers; the gentleman's horse is at the door, and as the rider is about to mount "and ride away," he is exchanging farewell vows with his love, who is leaning tenderly towards him out of a window immediately above the door. So constructed was the house by the artist (who was certainly no architect) that there was no space whatever for the lower part of the lady's person between the bottom of the window and the top of the door.

"Look!" said I to Landseer, "there is no place for the woman to stand in."

"She's the man's sweetheart, *notwithstanding*," replied the punster.

No sooner are the year's pictures launched before the public than I find myself hard at work in "fresh woods and pastures new." I found a good subject in Froude, who relates—on the authority of a French chronicler, I think—an incident in the career of that man of many wives, Henry VIII.—a trifling matter, but well adapted to pictorial representation. The chronicler says that Queen Anne Boleyn often accompanied her gentle husband on his deer-shooting expeditions in Windsor Forest. It occurred to me to place the royal couple, crossbow in hand, in a kind of leafy shelter, half-hidden by branches and bracken, waiting for the deer to be driven past them. I made Anne Boleyn stooping forward, her crossbow ready, while the king behind her is putting back an intruding branch, as he lovingly looks down at the head that soon after followed suit among the falling heads of that fearful time. The figures were dressed in green, entailing much difficulty, as in the landscape—though touched by "Autumn's fiery finger"—much green predominated; and if I did not succeed in producing what in the slang of to-day is called a "harmony in green," I made a nearer approach to an agreeable arrangement than many of the inexplicable nocturnes and symphonies that are too often presented to us now. Authorities for the likeness of Henry and his hapless queen are plentiful. Lord Denbigh possesses a lovely portrait of Anne Boleyn by Holbein, and from a photograph of that picture, together with a well-selected model, I made a tolerable likeness. My friend Sir William Hardman played the part of the king, for that occasion only. The learned Chairman of the Court of Quarter Sessions wore a beard at the time I speak of, which disfigured him into a strong resemblance to Henry VIII. I took advantage of the beard, and then endeavored to induce the wearer to remove it; and though I have not seen Sir William lately, I am told the hirsute deformity has disappeared. Lady Hardman's head is still in its natural place, and her husband is very amiable in private life, so the resemblance to the bloodthirsty king ceases with the beard.

The dramatists of the Restoration, notably Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar, though mainly painters of the manners of a dissolute time, have always been attractive to me as presenting subjects for pictures; and it occurred to me and a fellow-student to take up one of the plays of Vanbrugh, and illustrate every scene of it by slight water-color sketches. Many were the evenings we spent over this labor of love. We always compared our renderings of the same points, and wondered at the dissimilarity of our conceptions. Better practice in composition of light and shadow cannot be recommended to the student. Though many, indeed most, of the scenes were unworthy of the labor required to reproduce them as oil pictures, I owe one of my best dramatic pictures to Vanbrugh's "Relapse"—the play that my friend and I chose for illustration. The scene chosen is that in which Lord Foppington describes his way of passing his time to the two ladies of the piece, Amanda and Berinthia, and that inconstant gentleman Loveless.

The satins and brocades, the wigs and swords of Queen Anne's time afford seductive material for the painter; and I think I took full advantage of them, and produced a very satisfactory picture. After passing through several hands, it is now in the possession of one of the Brasseys; but whether the peer of that name or his brother, I know not.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REJECTED SUBJECTS.

My summer holiday in 1871 was spent at Boulogne, where I found a subject for a large composition suggested by the annual procession in honor of the Virgin patroness of the town. The bishop, with attending priests, numberless banners, living representatives of Scriptural personages, wooden copies of holy things, and every variety of Catholic ritual, together with crowds of votaries in long procession, parade the town; and as they go, women bring their children, well or ailing, to be blessed by the chief priest. The scene was brilliant in color, and picturesque in every sense of the word. I think it was one of the popes who, on giving his blessing to an unbeliever in its efficacy, said, "An old man's blessing can do you no harm." Judging from the eagerness of the mothers to obtain the bishop's blessing, and the benign dignity with which it was bestowed, both giver and receiver had perfect faith in happy results from it. I made many sketches; and the longer I thought of the subject the stronger became my determination to paint a picture of it. On inquiring how it came about that the Boulognese had arrogated to themselves so special a right to the particular protection of the Virgin, I was told that some centuries ago a boat was seen one night at sea, off the harbor of Boulogne, emitting a brilliant light from its bow. Some sailors put off to examine the singular apparition, and on nearing it, to their awe-stricken astonishment, they found that the light proceeded from a figure of the Blessed Virgin sitting solitary in the boat. The men towed the boat into the harbor, and the figure—made of wood—was conveyed to the cathedral, where it now remains, or I should rather say where rests all that remains of it; for the free-thinkers of the Revolution had so little respect for the holy relic that they destroyed the greater part of it, leaving only one of the hands, in the possession of which the cathedral still rejoices.

Peace having been signed between Germany and France, enabled me to go to Paris with comfort and safety. I found terrible traces of the war. A German sentinel paced backward and forward at the station at Criel. In Paris itself, the huge stones of the bridge of Neuilly were so knocked to pieces that the passage of it was dangerous. Porte Maillot was a heap of rubbish, and St. Cloud did not contain a habitable dwelling. The Tuileries, so dear to my youthful recollections, had been mercilessly injured by the dreadful Commune. Douglas Jerrold said the liberty of England was preserved in brine—the brine being the British Channel. The effects of war make one value "the silver streak" that separates happy England from Continental strife.

My time at Boulogne was mostly spent in reading, with the result of a subject from the life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. That celebrated beauty and writer was visited early one morning by her father, the Duke of Kingston. The visit was a surprise, for the lady was not fully dressed. Her daughter, afterwards Lady Bute, in describing the scene, says that though she was quite a child at the time, she well remembers the stately duke appearing suddenly in her mother's dressing-room, and the immediate sinking of her mother on her knees, asking and receiving her father's blessing. I represented Lady Mary in her brocade dressing-gown, the duke with the star always worn at that time by those entitled to it, while the future Lady Bute, still in her toy-time, plays about the floor. This picture was bought by George Moore, well known for his active philanthropy, whose sad death a few years ago was deplored by all who knew him, and by numbers whose knowledge of the man was only derived from his acts of beneficence.

My contributions to the Academy in 1872 consisted of the scene from Vanbrugh, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," and, most successful of all, a small picture of Boulogne fruit-girls, entitled "At my Window, Boulogne." To the window of our lodgings came two girls, carrying large flat baskets of grapes and peaches. They were dressed in effective costumes, with the high-frilled cap common to their species, and had bright, pretty faces. As they stood in the street resting their baskets on the window-sill—the open window forming a frame for them — they made "quite a picture." I bought many peaches and grapes, and the girls' dresses and caps also; and judging from the many demands I received for the picture, and the compliments paid me upon it, I think I may consider it one of my best.

An amusing trifle might be written in which overheard remarks made in public galleries upon the works displayed would surprise by their *naïveté*, and also by the surpassing ignorance of the speakers. Here is an example told me by my old friend Faed, R.A., whose delightful renderings of Scottish life are so well known. Some few years ago Faed exhibited a picture called "His Only Pair." A small Scotch boy sits with dangling naked legs upon a table, while his mother mends his only pair of breeks. The urchin is vigorously sucking an orange to beguile the time of waiting. Two female visitors to the exhibition were in front of the picture. One held the catalogue, and in reply to her friend's inquiry, "What is the subject?" replied:

"'His Only Pair.'"

"*Pear?*" said the connoisseur. "It looks more like an orange."

Another example occurs to me. A fine portrait of Mrs. Charles Dickens, painted by Maclise, was exhibited in Trafalgar Square. I happened to be close to two ladies who were eagerly scanning the picture, which by a misprint in the catalogue was called "*Mr.* Charles Dickens."

"Why," said one of the visitors, "it is a portrait of a lady; it can't be *Mr.* Charles Dickens!"

"Oh, yes, it is," replied her friend. "You know he is a great actor as well as writer; and the picture represents him in some female character. I wonder what the play was."

Yet another instance. A friend of mine exhibited a picture called "A Volunteer." The scene was the deck of a shipwrecked vessel. It is crowded by terrified people—apparently emigrants. One of the sailors has volunteered to swim ashore, and is on the point of leaving the ship, carrying a rope to be attached, probably, to some life-saving apparatus.

"A *volunteer?*" said an enlightened looker-on. "That's no volunteer—where are his regimentals?"

In an exhibition, some years ago, I put in an appearance with a small work of a girl with a dove on her shoulder. The girl was a gentle-looking, rather dovelike creature; so I christened the picture "Two Doves." I heard a lady who was looking at it say:

"Two doves? Why, that must be a misprint. Where is the second dove?"

I know some of my younger brethren who *were* fond of standing by their pictures to listen to the remarks made upon them. I say *were* fond of the practice. But the desire to hear genuine opinion seldom lasts long; for though, in the course of an hour, you may hear pleasant things, your satisfaction will be pretty sure to be marred by remarks the reverse of complimentary.

An artist, who seldom paints anything but what are called "religious subjects," saw some ladies eagerly scanning his work, when a gentleman friend came up to them and said:

"What's that? Oh, a Scripture piece. Don't waste time with that—it's very bad. All their Scripture pictures are shocking!"

My friend the sacred painter has no respect for public opinion.

The fact of its being "the thing" to go to the Academy Exhibition takes great numbers there who care for art just as much as they know about it, and that is nothing at all.

A year or two ago I was standing in the Great Gallery at Burlington House, when two young gentlemen sauntered into it. Then each, standing in the middle of the room, threw languid glances round the walls; and one said to the other:

"The things are all very much alike. Come away," and they went away.

It was my fate in the year 1872 to serve on the Hanging Committee—never anything but a painful duty; that year peculiarly so, from the many good pictures (in my opinion, good pictures) that were sent back to their producers, there being no room for them on the walls. And, strange to say, the bad pictures offered to us were as much worse than usual, as the more successful ones were better. The very worst attempts at painting produced in this country—or any other—were submitted to the committee for acceptance. Among the rest were some drawings said to be done by spirits. They were painted in water-colors, and handsomely framed and glazed, of course, at a considerable expense. They were quite indescribable, resembling nothing in heaven above or on the earth beneath, and were necessarily laughed out of the rooms. Now, it does appear to me that the spirits must have known that their works would be beyond our comprehension, and, therefore, sure to be rejected; why, then, suffer their proselytes to be at the mercy of such ignorant people as ourselves? to say nothing of the unnecessary trouble and expense incurred by the proprietors of such spiritual things!

The practice of the Academy as regards the reception of works intended for exhibition is so well known as to make what I am about to tell almost incredible. It is nevertheless true that a lady took a small picture to Burlington House, on the day named for receiving pictures, and showed it to one of the porters, telling him it was for exhibition.

"All right, madam," said the man, offering to receive the picture.

"No, no!" said the lady. "I must hang it myself. It has been painted for a particular light; and I wish to select the proper place and light myself."

That work—perhaps a great picture—disappeared with its producer, and was seen no more.

I conclude my remarks on the eccentricity of public judgment in the matter of the subject of pictures, by the following example:

The play of the "Colleen Bawn" may be familiar to many of my readers, and they will remember that an attempt was made to drown the heroine by a person called Danny Mann. Just at the time that the play was in the full swing of its popularity, a fine picture by Paul Delaroche was exhibited, called "A Christian Martyr." Death by drowning was the fate awarded to the unfortunate Christian, who was represented as a beautiful young girl, just on the point of sinking to a "muddy death." I have again to accuse the gentler sex of a ludicrous mistake, for I heard one lady say to another:

"Oh, what a beautiful Irish face! Look, there's the Colleen Bawn; and that man on the bank is that wretch Danny Mann, gloating over her, poor thing!"

My desire to discover materials for my work in modern life never leaves me, and will continue its influence as long as my own life lasts; and, though I have occasionally been betrayed by my love into themes somewhat trifling and commonplace, the conviction that possessed me that I was speaking—or, rather, painting—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, rendered the production of real-life pictures an unmixed delight. In obedience to this impulse I began a small work suggested by some lady-archers, whose feats had amused me at the seaside. I found sufficiently satisfactory models in three of my daughters, one of whom is in the act of shooting, the others standing by, bow in hand; a landscape background foils the figures agreeably enough. The subject was trifling, and totally devoid of character-interest; but the girls are true to nature, and the dresses will be a record of the female habiliments of the time.

I made my desire for subjects for pictures so generally known—even offering large rewards for suggestions (the only condition being that they should be such as I considered worthy of representation)—that I was often the recipient of strange advice. A stranger called on me, when a conversation like the following took place:

"Sir," said the man, "I have been told that you are willing to pay for a fine subject for a picture. What would you be disposed to give for one about as big as your 'Railway Station'?"

"If," said I, "you can propose to me a subject for a picture of the size and importance of the one you name, or of the 'Derby Day,' I will give you two hundred pounds for it. What is your subject?"

"Well, sir, I should be satisfied with the terms you mention, but the subject is my secret; and I hardly like to mention it, because I should not like it to be known, if you were to refuse it."

"Oh," I replied, "I will give you my promise not to reveal it if it is worth keeping secret; and I also promise to pay you the sum I name in the event of my painting it. What is it?"

After further hesitation my visitor said:

"A review in Hyde Park!"

"I am afraid," said I, "there is no novelty in that—it has been done pretty often, in illustrated papers and in pictures."

As the man was evidently sincere in his belief that he had discovered a treasure, I tried to enlighten him regarding some essentials without which his subject would be "stale, flat, and unprofitable."

"There must be a main incident of dramatic force, and secondary ones of interest. How could such be evolved from troops manœuvring and a crowd looking on?"

"Ah," said he, "I've thought of all that. I'll tell you how to do it. I should have in front—what you call the foreground, ain't it?—a man selling ginger-beer. You must make him just opening a bottle; the beer must be very much up—hot day, and that—and so the cork flies into a woman's eye; and then—"

"That is enough!" said I. "I don't think your subject would suit me. But if I ever paint a picture of it, you shall have the reward I promised."

"Well, but wait a bit, sir. Just you think, now—there might be a fat woman paying threepence for a stand, and the stand breaks down, and she wants her money back; and the stand-man says he'll be—"

"Yes, I know; but, really, I won't take up any more of your time. Mine is also valuable, so I must wish you good-morning."

On another occasion I was favored with a visit from a respectable-looking man, also big with a subject. After preliminary arrangements, and promises of reward, the idea was disclosed :

"'There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
Keeping watch o'er the life of poor Jack.'"

"A cherub!" said I. "I never saw a cherub; don't know what a cherub is like—do you? Perhaps you are not aware that artists don't trust to their imaginations for models; at least, I don't. So what am I to do for a model for your cherub?"

"A cherub," said the man, with the confidence of one well acquainted with such people, "is a naked child; and you should paint him sitting on the tip-top of the mast of a big ship. You needn't put in the hull of the vessel —just a yard-arm, and a bit of sail torn away by the storm; a black sky, and the lightning and thunder"— ("Difficult," thought I, "to paint thunder as to represent the same woman doing three different things, as proposed in the review subject")—"going it like anything. The mast should be rocking, and the cherub holding on to it like grim death, smiling all the while at the sailors below."

As the man spoke, my mind, in search of an authority for the cherub, wandered to certain monumental representations of those creatures; and, unless my memory betrayed me, the difficulty of sitting on the tip-top of a mast, or, indeed, of sitting at all, was quite apparent in all of them. I hinted as much, and my friend said :

"Ah, to be sure! I never thought of that. Well, he must have wings, you know—they all have—and he might be flying about the mast. Wouldn't that do?"

"Very well. Only what becomes of your quotation, which says your sweet little cherub is *sitting* aloft?"

I was again obliged to confess that the subject proposed was beyond my powers.

The name of Whiteley, universal provider, by whom a large portion of Westbourne Grove has been made into a huge establishment, is known all over the world. I have cause to know it, because my requirements are often supplied from the emporium presided over by that extraordinary man ; but till what I am about to relate took place, I never knew him in the flesh.

A letter was brought to me asking for an interview on "a matter of business," signed "William Whiteley." I was much puzzled as to what the "business" could be, as I owed Mr. Whiteley nothing at the time; indeed, the principles on which he conducts his business are such as to prevent the possibility of anybody owing Mr. Whiteley anything for an unreasonable time.

Punctually at 9.30, the appointed hour, the great trader made his appearance, and a shrewd, smart, honest appearance it is.

"Well, Mr. Whiteley," said I, "I am glad to see you" (I was both glad and curious). "What can I do for you?"

"Sir," said he, "I am an admirer of your works."

"I reciprocate the compliment," said I. "I sincerely admire yours."

Mr. Whiteley bowed, and proceeded to say that he had seen "Ramsgate Sands," and he greatly admired the variety of character, the—etc., etc. He had also seen the "Railway Station," about which he was complimentary to an extent that my modesty prevents my repeating; and he admired so-and-so—running through a whole catalogue of my pictures—ending by proposing a subject for a picture, to be called "Whiteley's at Four o'Clock in the Afternoon."

"I should leave it to your discretion, sir, to choose either the inside of the place or the outside. If you take the former, you would have the aristocracy making their purchases. You might introduce the young ladies who do me the honor to assist in my establishment, many of whom are very pretty. Then there are what are called shopmen, with fine heads, and every conceivable detail for your back and fore grounds. If, on the other hand, you select the outside of the shops you could introduce the *commissionaires*, who, as you may have observed, wear a picturesque livery created by me; you would have the nobility and gentry stepping into their carriages, with—

forgive my suggestions, they are subject to your criticism—street-beggars, toy-sellers—think of the contrast between them and my customers—and all the variety of character that Westbourne Grove always presents. There is but one stipulation that I venture to make if you select Westbourne Grove for the locality of the work, namely, that the whole length of the shops should be shown, care being taken that the different windows should display the specialties of the establishment."

As I listened to this extraordinary proposal, I found myself wondering if the proposed picture was intended to act as an advertisement for Whiteley's, when, as if he read my thoughts, Mr. Whiteley said :

"I never advertise; I never spent a shilling in that way in my life. My notions of the advantages of advertising take the form of good things at so small a profit as to make the purchasers recommend their friends to come to my shops ; and I have found that method of advertising so satisfactory that I feel no inclination to spend the enormous sums that some of my brethren in trade find, or think they find, profitable."

He then proceeded to inform me that he began in a very small way of business in a street off Westbourne Grove, with only two shop-girls to assist.

"I married one," said he, "and the other—no longer a girl—is still with me."

I was greatly interested in my visitor, and sorry that an engagement with my usual ten-o'clock model afforded me so little time to say much more than that I would consider his proposal and let him know the result. I thought the matter over, and declined the commission, and have often thought since that, though I should fear to undertake it, much might have been done with it. And if Mr. Whiteley should read my account of our interview I hope he will forgive me for relating it in conjunction with the ridiculous proposals already mentioned. I think his suggestion by no means absurd, but very much the contrary; and I also hope he will acknowledge that, in the telling of it, I have extenuated nothing, nor "set down aught in malice."

During the trial of the Tichborne claimant a subject was proposed to me. I may here remark that when a painter is hard at work visitors should be resolutely excluded. I have a wife who guards me in that respect like a dragon, and I am thus saved from interruptions which, though they may take up but little time, cause a wrench from one's work that is not only painful, but injurious. So when, one day, my servant informed me that a Captain N—— wanted to see me on a matter of business, I sent my "fidus Achates" to inquire what the business was. When I heard that my visitor came, on the part of a committee, to offer me a commission on my own terms to paint a large modern subject, I put down palette and brushes, full of curiosity to know the nature of the proposal.

I found Captain N—— to be unmistakably a gentleman, curiously reluctant to disclose his subject till I would promise to paint a picture of it. The reluctance was surmounted, and I found it was proposed that I should paint the trial of the Tichborne claimant, then drawing very near its close; the main object being the exhibition of the picture in London and the country, to procure funds for the defence of "my ill-used friend," as Captain N—— called him.

"You will have no difficulty as to sitters, Mr. Frith. The jury have agreed to give you every opportunity; the judge—Cockburn, you know—has been sounded, and has expressed no objection; the barristers employed have consented; and the claimant is only too anxious to see the work confided to you."

"Well, but," said I, "the trial, surely, cannot last much longer; it may be over any day. And, suppose your friend is condemned, he would not be allowed to come here, and I could not go to him."

"You may rest assured there is not the least chance of an adverse verdict. We will take the risk of that."

"Indeed," said I; "I don't share your confidence in the favorable result of the trial. I have read all the evidence, and I think the claimant will be severely punished; and I hope you won't mind my saying that I think he richly deserves what in all probability he will get."

"Do you, indeed?" said Captain N——, not in the least annoyed. "Then you don't believe him to be Sir Roger Tichborne?"

"No, I don't. Do you?"

"Well, I can't say I *believe* him to be the real man, because I am quite sure of it; indeed, I wonder how you or any one else can reconcile the unimpeachable evidence in my friend's favor with the idea of imposture. Now, though I have not the honor of your acquaintance, I don't think you will doubt that what I am about to tell you is absolutely true; and, when you have heard it, I shall be curious to know how you can doubt that the man now on his trial is Sir Roger Tichborne. I must tell you that Sir Roger is now living with me; we constantly pass together the time that does not require his presence in court. Well, so recently as the day before yesterday, I went to my tailor's to pay my account; and as I was writing my check the head of the firm—a stanch believer, by the way—asked me if the evidence of one who had seen the real Sir Roger (to use the common phrase) before he left the country on his supposed fatal voyage would be of service as a witness, as a man, now in the employment of a firm of tailors called Bugby & Haynes, was ready and willing to go to the court and swear—as he was justified in doing, having seen the claimant in the street—to his identity with the Sir Roger whom he well remembered. I thanked my informant, but said that as so many had recognized Sir Roger, another voice on the same side was scarcely worth consideration. However, on thinking the matter over, I felt curious to see the man, as he might be possessed of some convincing proof beyond that of mere recognition. I accordingly sought out the establishment of Messrs. Bugby & Haynes, and found the man I sought in the foreman of the concern, to which, twenty years before, he had been in the inferior position of porter.

"'I hear,' said I, 'you are willing to give evidence in favor of Sir Roger Tichborne? Have you any evidence in his favor beyond your power of recognizing him? How and where did you see him as a young man?'

"'I will show you,' said he, as he took down an old ledger; 'here you see, sir, is an entry of a pair of leather breeches (we dealt in nothing else then, leather breeches being our specialty) supplied to Roger Tichborne, then on a visit to Sir James Tyrrell, in St. James's Square. I took home those breeches and delivered them to the young gentleman, and he carefully examined them before he would pay the bill. I looked well at him then, and again afterwards, when he called to say he had tried the breeches, and liked them very much.'

"'Well, I will let you know if you are wanted.'

"Last evening I was writing a note in my chambers. Sir Roger was reading opposite to me, when it occurred to me to question him about the leather breeches; and I proceeded to do so, as cautiously as I thought an opposing barrister might do.

"'By the way, Sir Roger,' said I, 'what tailor did you patronize when you were in London? Were your clothes made in London?'

"'Sometimes—generally, indeed,' was the reply.

"'Do you remember the name of your tailor?'

"'Yes, Stultz, always.'

"'Then you never dealt with the firm of Bugby & Haynes?'

"'Haynes and what—Bugby?—precious ugly name that. No, never heard of 'em;' and he continued his reading and I my writing—disappointed, I confess, for as he had remembered Stultz, it was not likely he could have forgotten the others. In a minute or so I happened to look from my note to Sir Roger, who had closed his book and seemed absorbed in thought. Then he said:

"'What names did you say?'

"I repeated them.

"'Well,' said he, 'I begin to have a faint recollection of some such people, who made nothing but leather breeches, and—to be sure—I remember now quite well being supplied with a pair when I was stopping with Tyrrell in St. James's Square. Tyrrell recommended the tailors, and capital breeches they were. I rode more than fifteen hundred miles in those breeches, and then they were not worn out.'

"'Now, sir,' said Captain N—— to me, 'how do you get over that?'"

I confess I was staggered, but subsequent reflection supplied an explanation. The impostor had free access—afforded him by old Lady Tichborne—to bills and papers of every description, and he must have seen the account for the leather breeches among them.

Though the price offered me for painting the trial of the claimant was a very tempting one, I declined it; and it was well I did, for my intended sitter was, very soon after my interview with Captain N——, picking oakum instead of sitting for his picture.

Among the suggestions for the employment of my brush was one to be called "All Over but the Shouting." This came to me anonymously; and the theme was to be a cricket-match at Lord's—Harrow and Eton, I think. I was advised to paint the end of the game, when all but the shouting is supposed to be over. The advantage of carriages full of ladies getting luncheon, charming young Harrow boys comparing notes with octogenarian Harrow boys, *cum multis aliis*, were pointed out to me in vain; for I neglected this well-meant suggestion, as I have felt compelled to refuse many others.

The University Boat-race has been named to me as a good subject many times, and in a sense it is a good one; and if I had not painted the "Derby Day" I might be tempted to try it. But a little reflection will show that the incidents on the river-banks would be too much like those at Epsom to enable one to avoid the odious charge of repetition.

As an example, not only of the kindness of the people in proposing subjects, but also of their suggestions as to the way in which the pictures arising from them should be painted, I subjoin the following paragraphs, which reached me exactly as they are reproduced:

"About half an hour before the start. Hammersmith Bridge (as large as possible) right across the picture, at the extreme left."

"The bridge, with its wonderful freight, clearly seen from the Mall; men on the chains; carriages of every description.

"A steamboat half through the bridge, decorated with small flags, and having on board a band playing, and passengers; the funnel lowered."

"A boat with people seated in, and a fat woman being helped in. The boat is all on one side; the apparent fright of those seated.

"Many boats are by the Mall-wall waiting to carry people to the barges.

"The Thames police-boat clearing the way.

"Two or three four-oared crews and wager-boats. Barges with people on them.

"Steamers and barges decorated with flags."

"The houses on the Mall, namely,

Bridge House,
Digby "
Beach "
Ashton "
Ivy Cottage,
Kent House,

would all come out admirably.

"The Mall to be widened two or three feet, and the houses that slope back to be brought forward as far as the public-house. The Mall is not crowded until just before the race."

"Blue and red cloth along the balconies, and at the windows. Lovely women with race-glasses in their hands, some in blue silk.

"A lovely young woman in balcony, dressed in light violet velvet, with a beautiful white Maltese dog in her arms, and having the Oxford ribbon round his neck; with the sun shining on her she would look most brilliant."

"Ladies and gentlemen in every variety of clothing, some in winter, others in summer; numbers of children, some sitting along the Mall-wall with their feet nearly touching the water.

"Nigger with wooden leg, and white hat with wide band of light blue paper round it; he is carrying his fiddle.

"Girl with her intended; his arm round her waist. Dog, evidently lost."

"Two sweeps standing together, one smoking a short clay, very white, new pipe, and the other filling one, each with Oxford rosette in front of his cap.

"A man with tin can selling hot meat-pies. A boy has just bought one, and is holding it on the palm of his hand, looking at it with delight. A man standing by has bitten a large piece out of one, and discovered a dead mouse, which he is holding by the tail between his fingers, and is showing the man the hole it came out of. The pieman is laughing; the other is in a rage."

"Three men standing together, one holding a pot of beer in pewter; the other two are tossing to see who is to pay. One is holding the coin tightly between his hands, the other is looking doubtfully at a coin in his hand."

"An old lady in Bath-chair. A little rascal is trying to force her to buy some fusees, putting them close to her face. A girl, on the other side, trying to force her to buy colors; the old lady looking most indignant; her attendant is talking to a girl.

"A young swell smoking a beautifully colored meerschaum pipe, with a thief on each side of him. The one on his left puts both his hands on the swell's shoulders, and is laughing; the swell turns his head to see the cause. The one on his right is stealing his pin; a policeman standing close by is ordering a little girl to move on."

"An old gentleman standing near the houses, who has been robbed of his watch; he is examining the ring of his watch which is left on his chain; he has his tortoise-shell glasses across his nose; a little boy is watching him.

"A girl with a child asleep in a perambulator; boys teasing her.

"Gent and a girl standing together, the girl drinking from a flask.

"Tall soldier with his short girl."

"A workman standing next a lady; the smoke from his pipe blowing into her face; her peculiar expression.

"Girl with basket of buttonholes, and others with the race colors."

If I were to expatiate further, and give other examples of the propensity for proposing subjects to known painters, I should only weary my readers. None but painters know the extreme difficulty of the selection of a moment of time that shall be of sufficient interest and importance to warrant months, and perhaps years, being spent upon a representation of it. I have never been able to adopt one of the innumerable proposals made to me. Literary men, who should know better, always propose subjects that are inexplicable, unless the painter could adopt the method used in the old caricatures, namely, a kind of balloon-shaped form coming from the mouths of the actors in the scene, enclosing the words they are supposed to be saying. All pictures should, as a rule, tell their own story without the aid of book or quotation, though in some instances, no doubt, quotation is necessary for the understanding of the picture.

My contributions to the Exhibition of 1873 were unimportant, consisting of the "Lady Archers," already noted; a modern billiard-room, with two ladies playing, and studies of French and English flower-girls.

"The Procession at Boulogne" then occupied my thoughts and time, and my diary records my struggles with the subject, day after day, till the time for "sending in" in 1874. I fear I have little of interest to relate regarding the progress of that work. My model for the principal figure was the Abbé Toursel, a very delightful old priest, who, with his nephew, proved the most patient of sitters; and I was fortunate enough to find other good French models.

The small army of London models finds many Italians in its ranks, and, as a rule, they are among the steadiest and most patient, both men and women; but Heaven preserve me from the boys! One young gentleman took great delight in tormenting me by incessant fidgeting, *pretending* to go to sleep, and twisting his countenance into every conceivable distortion. Neither coaxing nor bullying produced any effect. He turned a deaf ear to my complaints, remarking on one occasion that he was glad my picture was a big one, otherwise he would expect it to be thrown at his head, as "Mr. Poynter threatened the other day." The best thing the boy did for me was to bring me his uncle, a person whose occupation in his own country had been that of a brigand, which calling he had pursued until he was so eagerly sought for by the Italian authorities that a sudden absence from his native land became imperative; and he found an asylum in England, and employment among the painters. He was an amusing fellow—making no secret of his former profession. He was forced into it, he said, by Garibaldi; and, in reply to my inquiry as to how that came about, he informed me that he was in the Italian army when the King of Naples was driven off by the Garibaldians; and, being very averse to revolutionary doings, and quite determined never to assist in them, he and several of his comrades took to the mountains, where they had a very happy time. My friend was a good-looking fellow—far from realizing the popular idea of a brigand—though he made a capital gendarme, as my picture would have proved if an unexpected event had not put a stop to his career as a model, and very nearly to his life.

While my picture of him was in progress he heard of the retirement of some of his friends from the mountains, and their successful retreat to Paris, from whence came a warm invitation to join them for a few days.

"My expenses to be paid, you know, sir. The young Marquis Napolini, a great friend of mine, was one of us. He's got plenty of money. Oh! that's all right."

"And how long shall you be away?" said I.

"Only two tree week."

"And you won't forget that I shall want more sittings for your face?"

"No; all right."

But matters in Paris were not all right. For, at a meeting of the brigands, a dispute took place, and the young and noble Napolini, being of a choleric nature, and unable to relish some observations of my model, seized a bottle of claret and struck my Italian full in the face with it. Some weeks were passed in hospital, that fearful nephew of his told me with a chuckle; and he also remarked that it was his opinion, from what he had heard, that his uncle would not be of use as a model any more. The young wretch was right, for, when my brigand appeared after his return, I certainly should not have recognized in the battered individual before me the jovial fellow who went to Paris with such a light heart. The handsome nose that I had modelled so carefully was almost gone, and the face was otherwise frightfully scarred and disfigured, so I was reluctantly obliged to seek another model for my gendarme.

Whether it was that I again tried to do too much—for I find I exhibited four other pictures (besides painting small matters) in the Exhibition of 1874—or from some other cause, the "Procession" proved far less successful than I expected.

Though I cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that Richardson is a greater writer than Fielding, I am a great admirer and constant reader of his works, and had always a desire to try my hand on a picture of "Pamela," if I should ever find in a model anything approaching the beauty that is suggested by the great author of her letters. What was my surprise and delight when, on visiting an artist, my old friend Maw Egley, I saw in his studio a pretty creature who might have been "Pamela" herself! My friend was painting a picture of the girl, and, in reply to my inquiry if she were a "regular model," I was told that, perhaps, she might be induced to sit for me, but that she had no intention of following the trade of model.

She came to me, and I painted a picture of "Pamela" in the act of writing one of her home-letters. She was, and is, a sweet creature; and, though now married and blessed with some small "Pamelas," she retains much of her beauty.

The charms of my model tempted me to paint two more pictures from her — one of which was called "Wandering Thoughts;" the other, "Sleep."

These pictures were all the size of life; and I contributed yet another life-size work: a girl at her devotions, which I christened "Prayer."

"Pamela" was by far the best and most popular of the series; indeed, it was, and I fear always will be, the best "single-figure picture" I have ever done.

In speaking of my principal work of the year 1874, I wish to record the kind assistance I received from Cardinal —then Archbishop—Manning. The subject was one of great interest to that eminent person; and I am indebted to him for the vestments, robes, mitres, etc., indispensable for the production of the picture.

By the laws of the Royal Academy all members are entitled to send eight pictures to any of the annual exhibitions. This privilege (of which I trust we shall soon deprive ourselves) is not often claimed, and, whenever it is exacted, the result is nearly always as unfortunate for the artist as it is for the public, for it requires the genius of a Reynolds or a Gainsborough to produce eight works in one year that shall be, one and all, worthy of public scrutiny. I am an example of the truth of what I say, for in the year 1875 I, for the first and I hope the last time in my life, exhibited eight works. And those worthy of being seen might certainly have been counted on the fingers of one hand—indeed, I am not sure that there would not have been a finger or two to spare even then. A very elaborate and careful little picture of "Tom Jones" showing "Sophia" her own image in the glass as a pledge of his future constancy was creditable enough, and one or two of the rest—all half-length, life-sized pictures—may have been what is called "up to the mark;" but I cannot say as much for the others, which showed marks of such haste and incompleteness as should never be allowed to appear in any work intended for public exhibition. Quality, and not quantity, should be the guide of the academic contributors to the exhibition, as well as of those who have the selection of the works of outsiders.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PIOUS MODEL.

Among the ignorant—and how large that class is as regards matters of art it would be impossible to calculate—the idea commonly prevails that pictures are evolved out of the painter's inner consciousness, or, in other words, are created out of nothing. The fact that nature is constantly referred to, that for the most trifling detail the artist never trusts to his memory, that he not only uses models for the human beings which may fill his compositions, but that he seeks far and wide for the smallest object to be represented, will be a revelation to most people. That being so, the model becomes a most important factor, either as a human being or a detail, to all painters; and the difficulty of discovering the needful type becomes sometimes almost impossible.

If I may presume to be known as an artist, it is as the painter of large compositions, such as the "Derby Day," the "Railway Station," "Ramsgate Sands," etc., etc., and it has been my fate to undergo much tribulation in my search after material in various forms. During the execution of the picture of "Ramsgate Sands," after much search I found an individual exactly suited to my purpose. My servant announced a visitor:

"A person of the name of Bredman has called."

"Is he a model?"

"I think so."

"Good-looking?"

"No, sir."

"Show him in."

Mr. Bredman was a man of about thirty, dressed in a fustian jacket and trousers much the worse for wear; a somewhat heavy countenance with strongly marked character; a serious, indeed solemn, expression—in fact, the exact type I had sought for. I engaged him immediately, and, though he had never sat before, I found him an attentive and excellent sitter.

It is obvious that an artist must talk to his models if he expects to rouse the expression necessary for his work, and it is also obvious that conversation becomes difficult or easy according to the intelligence of the model. I found Bredman far above the average of the ordinary model. He had read most of the books with which I was familiar, and with one book, the most important of all, he showed more acquaintance, I am sorry to confess, than I enjoyed myself: indeed, he surprised me by producing a Testament, in which he seemed absorbed during the necessary intervals of rest. On one occasion, I remember, when my wife brought one of our children into the studio, Bredman's solemn face brightened pleasantly as he took the child on to his, not very satisfactory, fustian knee.

"You seem fond of children," said my wife.

"Well, mum, I should hope so," said Bredman. "Haven't we got an example here?" tapping the Testament.

"Are you married? Have you any of your own?"

"I am married, mum, but have no children *yet*."

The peculiar accent on the word "yet" impressed me, and in the course of our work I asked my serious friend if he had hope in the happy direction of a family.

"Well, yes, sir, please God, before very long."

Bredman sat to me many times, and though, as I said before, he was familiar with many subjects, his thoughts evidently dwelt most on the most serious of all; and I found that he was convinced that he was in what he called "a state of grace"—that he was one of the elect, in fact. His conversion took place on a certain day in June at a chapel in Tottenham Court Road; at a special instant of time his sins were forgiven; from that time forward he was secure, his celestial condition was sin-proof.

"And I only wish, sir, you was in the happy frame of mind as I have felt in ever since."

Bredman's affection for his wife seemed very strong. He took much pleasure in telling me, in reply to my inquiries after her, that "It couldn't be very far off;" and the tears often came into his eyes, and on more than one occasion rolled down his cheeks, when he drew affecting pictures of the danger and suffering that might be in store for her. My model lived somewhere in Southwark, and on a tempestuous night in December he rang my door-bell. It was late; my servants had gone to bed, and I was about to follow, when the bell stopped me. On opening the door, I found Bredman drenched with rain, and in a terrible state of mind. The event had taken place unexpectedly; no preparation, or scarcely any, had been made; no baby-clothes. "No nothing hardly," said the weeping man. "Would Mrs. Frith look him out something?" The doctor said the poor thing must have "strengthening things, port wine," etc., and he had no means. I aroused my wife, and Bredman left with a bundle of small habiliments, port wine not being forgotten. Our sittings continued, and each morning I anxiously inquired after the wife and child.

"The doctor is very kind, sir, very attentive. He says she'll pull through, he thinks; but she is very bad, and he don't know if the child will live. Oh! if only *she* is saved, how truly thankful I shall be!"

I had recommended the man as a model to several of my brother artists, among the rest to my old friend Mr. Egg, R.A.

About a fortnight after Mrs. Bredman's confinement I met Mr. Egg, who had received a call from Bredman, and an appeal for assistance in similar terms to those he had made to me. Egg was a bachelor, so baby-clothes were impossible; but money and wine were supplied abundantly.

A month elapsed, during which I had varying accounts of Mrs. Bredman's condition from her husband. More port wine, and a promise—which did not seem enthusiastically received—that Mrs. Frith would go to Southwark as soon as his wife was well enough to see her.

"It's such a poor place, you know, sir, for a lady to come to; and the poor thing is so weak and nervous, the doctor says it wouldn't do—not yet."

I think six weeks had passed since Bredman had been made a happy father, when a friend of mine, a Mr. Bassett, who had frequently seen Bredman sitting to me, called to tell me that he had just received a visit from my model, in great distress at the premature confinement of his wife—there were no preparations, no baby-clothes, and so on. Mr. Bassett was not provided with infant habiliments, but he was with money and port wine, both of which were gratefully carried off by my pious friend.

"Did he tell you when the event took place?" asked I.

"Yes," said Bassett, "last night between ten and eleven; and he would have come to me then if it hadn't been so late."

What a very extraordinary woman Mrs. Bredman must be! thought I. It then occurred to me that it was desirable, in the interest of myself and friends, that I should see this wonderful woman. Accordingly I lost no time in wending my way to Southwark. I easily found Mr. Bredman's lodging, which, as he said, was but a poor place. There was a perpendicular row of bell-handles, and I pulled one after another, till I found the door answered by a respectable-looking woman.

"Does Mr. Bredman live here?"

"Yes, sir; but he is not at home: he has been out all day."

"Is Mrs. Bredman in?"

"Who, sir?"

"Mrs. Bredman."

"He ain't married; there ain't no Mrs. Bredman. He has lodged here two years and a half, and I am quite sure he is not married. Why, he is that cheerful and steady; always in, and reading of an evening, when he ain't playing with my children, and they are that fond of him!"

"Oh," said I, "I thank you; I wish you good-evening."

It happened that my regenerated friend was engaged to sit for me the morning after my journey to Southwark, and it certainly seemed strange that his landlady had said nothing to him about the inquirer after Mrs. Bredman; that such was the case was evident by the placid unconcern with which my model fell into the attitude in which he may be seen in "Ramsgate Sands," where he is depicted offering a "Tombola" for sale to an old woman who will none of it.

"Well, Bredman, how's the wife?"

"I think she'll pull through, now, sir. She felt a little faint last night; I gave her some of your port wine, and she got all right. I hope I shall always remember you and Mrs. Frith, and all your kindness."

"Did you taste it yourself, Bredman?"

"Well, I won't deceive you, sir; she made me take just a drop, and it was that good!"

"And the baby—by the way, is it a boy or a girl?"

"A boy, sir. He rather squints just now, and he is a little yellow, but the doctor says those things will mend themselves."

"Doesn't kneeling like that tire you very much? Just rest a while."

"Thank you, sir," and the Testament was produced as usual.

"Put that book away, Bredman; I don't like to see you handling it just now."

"Ah, sir, if only you would—"

"Bredman, do you know what the punishment is for those who obtain money by false pretences?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, you are very likely to know. You have no wife and no child; you have obtained clothes and money from me, from Mr. Egg, Mr. Bassett, and probably from others, and you richly deserve— Now, what have you got to say for yourself?"

In an instant the man was sobbing, the tears pouring down his face. He evidently couldn't speak for some moments. He then looked up with an expression on his face quite new to me, and he said:

"I am an infernal rogue, ain't I?"

"You are," said I. "Now get out of my room, and never let me see your face again!"

The man's character became too well known in the profession for the calling of model to be any longer possible for him, and strange as it may appear, though his career as a hypocritical knave was well known to us, a sufficient sum was subscribed by artists to enable him to go to Australia. He found his way to the diggings, which were in full swing at that time; and I received a grateful letter from him, still in my possession, in which he informed me he was prospering, and he hoped helping the good cause by the sale of religious works in a store at Ballarat.

CHAPTER XXIX.

VISIT TO ITALY.

In the early days of the study of art in this country it was thought so necessary for the student to go to Italy, where the finest pictures were supposed to be plentiful and easy of access, that special advantages were offered to those who had gained gold medals in the Royal Academy to enable students with slender purses to spend two years abroad. In those days we had no National Gallery, and, no doubt, Italy contained treasures which have since found their way to this country. However that may be, a visit that I paid to Italy—in the year at which these reminiscences have arrived—convinced me that, with the exception of Florence, the student will seek in vain for works of the Old Masters to be compared for a moment with those of our own in the National Gallery.

We are students to the end of our days, but it is not in our juvenescent period that we can appreciate the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Those giants put forth their full strength in Rome, and, if that city be visited at all, it should be at a time when the mind's eyes have been opened by long study and experience. As a proof of this it may be remembered that even so great a genius as Reynolds—who saw the Sistine Chapel and the frescoes in the Vatican when he was but a tyro—confesses to his disappointment and wonder at the reputation of Michael Angelo ; though he lived to be thankful that he could fully appreciate that great man, of which he gave a touching proof in the last of his lectures to the students at the Royal Academy, the closing words of which were the name of Michael Angelo.

Some letters written by me during my visit to Italy have been preserved, and I propose to quote largely from them, as they will be found, among other—I trust amusing—descriptive matter, to contain opinions on art carefully formed, and still unaltered.

My wife and two daughters accompanied me, and we put ourselves in the care of the best of couriers. Our route lay through Paris to Marseilles, from whence I write:

"Marseilles is a wonderful place. We seemed to have arrived at the blue sky and heat of Italy. The Mediterranean so blue—but not so blue as it is always painted—and on the shores of it every conceivable type of human being except the English: I saw not one yesterday. Such fellows! Greeks, Turks, Spaniards—in fact, types of every nation under the sun. And then, the Marseilles women, though seldom pretty, and with no special costume to mark them, are full of character. I saw the flower-girls that A—— talks of, but there is nothing—except that they sit in a kind of nest under an awning, which is picturesque enough—to distinguish them from other flower-girls; and there was not a pretty one among them. This place is a second Paris on a small scale. Splendid streets, boulevards with arcades of linden-trees—the shade from which will be required in summer—incessant jingling of horse-bells, peculiar cries, and still more peculiar smells."

"Nice, *April* 6.

"We left Marseilles on Sunday afternoon, and passed through some lovely country to reach this place. Whether it was that my fellow-travellers were over-fatigued (one being quite ill) to take interest in it, I can't tell; but I could get only a languid look up from Miss Braddon or Wilkie Collins when I appealed to them to admire the mountains of Savoy, whose snowy tops were just receiving the last rays of the setting sun—wonderfully like the best scenery of an opera! There are those pine-trees that grow to a good height and then terminate in a round, black, bushy top—so often reproduced by Turner and others. And the rocks and hills in the uncertain, silvery, misty light of evening looking so like what in theatrical phrase are termed flats, as if, at a whistle of a man at the wings, they could be slid along.

"We arrived at Nice just as evening changed into night, and were deposited at a charming hotel facing the Mediterranean, with geraniums in full bloom, and palms and cacti growing in profusion from the front down to the sea. I stepped from the window on to a broad marble balcony—the sky so clear and pure, the stars seeming brighter and nearer than at home, to a degree that our distance from England did not seem to account for. The night was most lovely, and, though there was no moon, I fancied I could see miles over the sea. Just as I was turning to go back to the dining-room, a clear ringing voice from below struck up the hymn to the Virgin. How perfectly the music seemed in harmony with the scene! Only a strongish flight of poetic fancy was required to induce one to believe that the lovely tones of the 'Ave Maria' reached the stars that seemed so near.

"'It is a blind Italian woman, sir,' said the waiter. 'She always comes on Sundays to sing the Evening Hymn. Dinner is ready.'

"Fancy waking next morning and finding the beautiful bay as foggy as London, a pelting rain falling, and the sky—when you could see it—as unpromising as it could well be. For the present, getting out was out of the question. In the afternoon the weather cleared a little, and we drove through Nice and on to the hills that envelop and environ it, from the top of which you take in the whole panorama of Nice, with the two horns of its crescent form stretching far out into the Mediterranean. Villas of every possible and impossible form nestled among pine and olive trees, castellated whims of idiotic Englishmen, Gambart's marble palace, magnificent hotels, and long rows of houses and shops—not so very unlike Eastbourne—make up the brick and mortar of the scene, and have done their best, or their worst, to spoil the glorious handiwork of Nature."

"*April* 7.

"Yesterday we went to Monaco, where I saw Homburg in little, *Rouge et Noir* on its last legs—black legs—a very languid affair compared to what I remember it in Germany; the rooms small and tawdry compared with the Salon d'Or. But Monaco, with its delicious gardens overhanging the sea, lovely beyond description! The place is heaven, with a hell in the midst of it. As to his altitude the prince of that little country, he had best make hay while the sun shines, for the time will soon come when the gates of his infernal region will be closed and the devils shut up. The existence of this monarch, with his little kingdom and his little army—the whole affair a kind of doll's house! The capital is perched on a lovely hill; the streets being but narrow passages, many of them impassable for carriages, and in none could one carriage pass another. And then the wee soldiers—tawdry with blue and gold, with their little cocked-hats done up in oilskin, marching about like bantams and keeping sentry over nothing at all—are supremely ridiculous, and would be passed with a shrug and a smile if they did not assist to keep up what is a scandal to Europe. Bismarck is wanted.

"We dined at the hotel at Monte Carlo, wolfish women sitting opposite to us, whose gambling we had watched, and whose hunger was as ravenous as their way of satisfying it was revolting. As we left the place at eight o'clock, on our return to Nice, trains were depositing scores of gamblers whose eager rush to the room was awful to see. I must not quit Nice without an effort to give you an idea of the house in which my old friend Gambart is passing, if not the evening, the afternoon of a prosperous life. You must try to figure for yourself the kind of place described in the 'Lady of Lyons'—'a palace lifting to eternal summer its marble walls from out of groves' of so-and-so 'musical with birds'—and you will arrive at an idea of Gambart's place, barring the birds. It is a long, two-storied building of purest white marble, with statues on the top relieved against the sky; exquisite in proportion and in taste, outside and in. The rooms, lofty and light, filled, but not overcrowded, with pictures, sculptures, china, and the rest of it. We had luncheon in harmony with the surroundings, rare Venetian glass, pretty to look at, but awkward to drink from; though what was in the glass was as rare as the glass itself. Baron Gudin, the marine painter, was there; he gave me a very high-flown and eulogistic reception, and showed unmistakable symptoms of an intention of kissing me. I am glad he didn't proceed to that dreadful extremity, for I must have submitted. Neither my pen nor my pencil could do justice to Gambart's palace. He has groves of olive-trees, miles of palm-walks (the estate is called Les Palmiers), masses of orange-trees—the fruit of which, ripe in April, is, to my taste, inferior to the two-a-penny oranges in London—and every variety of flowers in almost tropical luxuriance. 'These were in their full beauty in January,' he says, 'but are now going off a little.' Think of that state of things in Nice, and London in January! Here, high above the sea, and from a terrace at the bottom of the garden, you get a view of the bay and the whole of Nice such as, I imagine, the whole world cannot surpass. To-day we take the famous drive along the Cornice Road to St. Remo, and to-morrow to Genoa."

"GENOA, *April* 10.

"We left Nice on Wednesday, and arrived at St. Remo, our first Italian stopping-place, in the evening, after the most wonderful drive in the world along the famous Cornice Road—no pen nor tongue can give an idea of the beauty of it. After leaving Nice we were nearly two hours ascending the mountains, a high stone wall to the right of us, and to the left mountain after mountain, now close upon us, then rearing themselves in shadowy distance; valley after valley, sometimes on our level, sometimes far down below. Now the road wound round the summit of a hill, with only a low parapet to protect you from a precipice a thousand feet deep. Then you turned suddenly, and found the blue Mediterranean to vary the scene. What effects of light and shadow on the landscape! the scattered houses looking like toys so far below, then mile after mile of olive-trees and wonderful Eastern-looking patches of date and palm trees. It was a scene to be remembered—and what a feeble idea I have given you of it!

"We stopped to rest at Mentone—a close, stifling place, much favored by invalids. I think the finest view of all was from the hill, after leaving Mentone, on the top of which is the Italian custom-house. Never can I forget the look back. Mentone stretches far into the sea at the base of a mountain of magnificent form; this is repeated by still grander mountain-shapes, piled one upon another till they are lost in distance. Some were snow-topped, and the summits of others seemed suspended in air, from the effect of clouds which lay in misty volume across them. The sun now and again lightened up distant valleys, or glinted for a moment across the mountain-sides. The day was slightly cloudy, and very favorable for seeing variety of effect; and I fully appreciated it. We stayed the night at St. Remo—a lovely spot—and then started for Genoa on a tedious, but grand, journey by rail along the sea to this city of palaces, where we arrived in the evening."

"PISA, *April* 12.

"We only stayed one night in Genoa—a place full of interest, and the first at which I found fine pictures—only a few of them, but those few how splendid! The Via Nuova and Nuovissima are composed of the palaces of the old and modern nobility—very few of the former are left. The palaces where the Dorias, the Balbis, and the Spinolas lived and plotted are *cafés* or photographic establishments. So, instead of love-murmurs, or the interchange of a look or a rapid word that devoted a rival to perdition, you have the rattle of billiard-balls and the smell of collodion. The streets are so narrow between these palaces that two carriages can barely pass. There is no foot-pavement, and how people are not frequently run over amazes me; but the high doorways and the massive doors! and the courtyards, inner court after inner court, till you arrive at marble staircases guarded by marble animals, intended, probably, for lions—bigger than any real lions in the world. And when you are at the top of the stairs—and 'such a getting up-stairs' it is—you find yourself in rooms with decorations unlike anything you ever saw; and here and there pictures by Vandyke, painted by that young gentleman when he was a guest, perhaps in the very rooms in which you stand, and placed by him on the walls, in the frames in which you find them. What would those splendid swells—who look as if they were born to command the world—say if they could see the uses to which their homes have come at last? Most of the Genoese Vandykes have been sold and removed; but in the Pallavacini Palace there are several as fine, or finer, than any I have seen, together with Italian and Spanish pictures of great beauty. The Academy of Arts, in which two or three melancholy students were drawing, was a dismal business. The place was filled with bad pictures of the modern Italian school.

"We were taken through all the schools. In the Life School there was the stuffy, hot feeling I know so well—indeed, except that the room is much smaller than that at Burlington House, I could have fancied myself there.

"The churches are, of course, splendid in Genoa and everywhere else, but those we have seen up to the present writing have contained no noteworthy pictures; and, as their other attractions were no attractions to me, I confess I was anxious to avoid them—partly on account of the risk of cold to my party—as our courier was determined I should not miss one if he could help it. Many fights we had on the church question, but I was nearly always conqueror.

"We intended to have driven round Genoa the morning we left, but the rain was incessant; and for the last few days we have had fires, and I have been glad of a great-coat. I therefore know nothing of the splendor of the bay, about which I have heard so much, except what I saw of it as we came in by rail. The railway journeys are lovely, so far—that from Genoa to Pisa surpassing everything. The Gulf of Spezzia, where Shelley was drowned, the Carrara marble mountains, and the whole route, form a variety of pictures never to be forgotten. We saw the leaning tower of Pisa and the group of buildings near it in the evening light, but reached Pisa too late to visit them till yesterday morning. I wish I could give you an idea of the old-world look of the things. They stand together—the cathedral, the tower, and the Campo Santo—alone, silent, but how eloquent! I have never before seen any building that conveyed to me so complete a sense of what may be called the 'atmosphere of dead centuries' that seemed to encompass them—grave and dignified, without the least thing in common with the present time."

"ROME, *April* 14.

"We arrived here at seven to-night, and all I have seen of Rome was in a drive through some streets, which are exactly like those of any second-rate French town — the same jingling of horse-bells, the same tall houses with green window-shutters, more French than Italian names on the shops—in fact, French all over. I could see the Pincian Hill from my window at the Hôtel Russie if it were not too dark—so says the landlord, who looks and talks like an English duke.

"One of the most charming places we have yet seen is Pisa. The Arno, a muddy, yellow stream, runs through it, and our hotel was on the bank. On looking out of window, on the night of our arrival, we saw a quaint line of Italian buildings, consisting of churches, palaces, tall campanili—a beautifully broken, irregular architectural line, relieved darkly against a glorious evening sky. An oddly-shaped, angular house was one of these, and, on inquiry next day as we drove past it, I was informed it was the Palazzo Ugolino.

"'And there, sir,' said the driver, 'is the count.'

"Every one knows Reynolds' 'Ugolino,' that grim old man, sitting hungry—or perhaps past hunger—waiting for death, with his children about him, in the Torre de Fame at Pisa. I turned round and had a good look at the lineal descendant of the starved old count, and beheld a small, good-looking dandy, with a little black mustache, smoking a long, thin Italian cigar; his cloak thrown over his shoulder in the assassin fashion common in these parts, and walking as the Italian youth is prone to move, like a theatrical supernumerary who has either just committed a murder behind the scenes or is on his way to do it.

"There is nothing in the way of pictures at Pisa. Those at the Campo Santo, though interesting, could never have been fine frescoes, and are now all but destroyed.

"The next evening found us at Siena, after a railway journey passing, as usual, through fine scenery, if we could have seen it; but there was a continuous downpour, causing mists which obscured our views with provoking pertinacity. But, from glimpses of mountain and valley, I have no doubt a fine day would have revealed great beauties. Of all the filthy places to stop at — how much more to live in — commend me to Siena. Never can I forget the drive through those narrow, sloppy streets, the tall, black houses overhanging and choking one, through street after street, till we stopped at a dark, low-roofed entry, and were told we had arrived at our inn. Great Heaven! What a place to stop at! We walked up the wet, dirty, uneven flagstones, escorted by a little brigand-like landlord, to a cavernous staircase, so dark that it required a dull oil-lamp even in daylight to direct the feet of us miserable guests up a honeycombed marble staircase till we reached a great, rambling, dirty sitting-room, with chairs so hard that it was a positive relief to stand. And the bedrooms—oh, the bedrooms!—mine looked as if forty murders had been committed in it. Our dismayed faces, after the comforts of Pisa, may be imagined. 'We won't stop! Nothing should induce us!' and so on. But we soon found Siena was our master, for the other inns were, if possible, worse; and, what was worst of all, we could not leave for Rome till Wednesday, for the train left at ten in the morning, and it was now seven at night—and 'there is so much to see in Siena, signor.' So we ate our dirty dinner, waited upon by the dirtiest waiter eyes ever beheld, and went to bed on straw mattresses, which made a horrible noise when we moved. I was awakened at two in the morning by a series of hollow groans coming from the room next to mine, like the last signs of life in a man being murdered. I sat up in bed and simply said to myself, 'That is a queer noise!' when it was repeated with additions and improvements. I soon became awake to the fact, which was that my neighbor had a bad attack of nightmare; and I don't know which disturbance was the worse, the nightmare or the *finale* to 'Lucia,' to which he treated me as I was dressing in the morning. After a dirty breakfast, served by the dirty waiter, we sallied forth to the cathedral, which repaid us to some extent for the discomfort we had endured. It is truly magnificent, with its wealth of ornament, its lovely inlaid marbles and mosaics. It is built of black and white marble in alternate layers, so the effect of the columns is something like a lady's black-and-white-barred stocking, not altogether pleasing to my eye.

"The school of painting in Siena was one of the most famous in Italy. In the Academy there was a large collection of what Flatow called 'the Chamber-of-Horror pattern,' not half so good as ours in the National Gallery, and some of it with little more pretension to be classed as real art than that of Japan or China. But in one of the churches there is an exquisite Crucifixion by Perugino, Raphael's master; and the library of the cathedral is decorated with frescoes by Pintoricchio, a friend and fellow-pupil of Raphael's. These are wonderful works, and for the first time in my life I felt the full beauty of fresco: this sensation to be strengthened and confirmed to its utmost extent by what I saw by Raphael in Rome. There are no doubt some very picturesque buildings in Siena, notably the town-hall in the great piazza, with its thin, tall tower, and lots of churches filled with wretched pictures; but he who misses Siena will not miss much besides dirt and discomfort. How glad I was to find myself spinning along through exquisite scenery on the brightest of bright mornings, leaving Siena behind, and having Rome in front! Never, to my last day, shall I forget the first sight of Rome, or, rather, of the dome of St. Peter's on the horizon, marking the place of the Eternal City."

"ROME, *April* 18, 1875.

"My head is in such confusion from all I have seen in Rome that I shall find it difficult to convey to you any of the wonders of the place. Modern Rome is a huge French town, less Italian than Pisa or Siena a great deal. But ancient Rome, or, rather, the ruins of it—what can I say of them that has not been much better said already? It is impossible to give a notion of the sensations that take possession of you on the first sight of the Forum, with its triumphal arch and its time-mouldered columns, the Via Sacra running through it, paved with the very slabs of rough stone, unlike in shape and color to anything in the world, over which poured the thousands thronging to the bloody shows at the Coliseum!

"It must be a dull imagination indeed that does not repair the broken seats, replace the enormous awning, and see the row upon row of passionate eyes watching the struggle of the gladiators, or enjoying with brutal pleasure the sufferings of the Christians. Certainly if the Christians suffered eighteen hundred years ago, they have much the best of it now; for, instead of worshipping in secret catacombs, they are now housed in such 'poems in stone' as prove, in their absolute perfection, the hopelessness of rivalry, and go far to reconcile us (in the impossibility of excelling these works of the mighty dead) to the constant reproduction of them by modern architects.

"I think I may safely assert that there are more bad pictures in Rome than in any city in the world. The good pictures may be counted on your ten fingers, always excepting the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo; indeed, I doubt if I have seen ten, though I have visited so many palaces inhabited by the descendants of the Colonnas, Dorias, Farnesi, Cenci, and the rest of them; but then the ten are magnificent. In one palace, the Farnesina, there is a gallery filled with Raphael's frescoes; in another the 'Sacred and Profane Love,' by Titian, perhaps the finest picture in the world; a splendid portrait of a villainous-looking pope, by Velasquez; a 'Danae,' by Correggio, his best work out of Parma; and a few works of the Italian school.

"We went yesterday to a monastery to see a lot of mouldering remains of lamps, spoons, broken armor, etc., said to be contemporary with the Cæsars, the ruins of whose palace still exist in huge, ugly masses, round which the east wind blew with an icy sharpness in April, unsurpassable on a winter's day in the Highlands. I think I have seen more villainous faces in Rome than I ever saw before, both in men and women—the former look as if they would gladly cut your throat for sixpence, and the latter as if they would assist in the operation. The graves of Keats and Shelley, which we saw yesterday, are tenderly cared for.

"I had two delightful hours this afternoon alone with Michael Angelo and Raphael in the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican. I left the place fully persuaded that the two men were superhuman, unrivalled, and forever unapproachable. The study of their works ends in the conviction that the painters implicitly believed in the divine truth of the themes they illustrated—nothing else, notwithstanding their God-gifted genius, could have inspired them; and, difficult as it is to believe that Raphael really took it for granted that saints, armed with long swords, appeared in the sky at a moment when fortune was going against one of the popes in battle, and so turned the tables on his enemies, I think the assumption must be allowed."

"NAPLES, *April* 23.

"We left Rome on Wednesday, and at a distance of at least fifty miles from Naples, Vesuvius loomed upon us; more gigantic, and in all ways grander, than we expected. The smoke from the cone looked at first like a little white cloud resting on the summit; but a nearer approach showed us its movability, and we very soon could distinguish the volumes of smoke as they ascended into the evening air, and then moved away in cloudlike forms.

"As we drove through Naples from the station I felt the keenest disappointment. There is an Italian proverb, 'See Naples, and then die'—of the smells, I should add; for of all the dirty places and dirty people I ever saw, the like of those we passed through on our way to the hotel surpassed all previous experience. But at last we turned towards the bay, and then the glorious sight that met my eyes was ample compensation. Something like Nice, Naples forms a huge crescent, backed up by hills of every shape and color; with Vesuvius looking like a king among his vassals as he towers above the rest. Every variety of color—pearly-gray, golden-brown, and the tenderest negative green—mixing together in the evening light, pervaded the mountains; and they seemed almost upon you in the pellucid air. But oh! the dirty, colorless, unpicturesque brutes that made the living element in this magic scene! I had imagined the lazzaroni of Naples with red caps, faded velvet jackets of every shade of color, naked legs and thighs, mending nets, chatting to dark-eyed beauties, and so on; instead of which they are drabby, shabby, dirty creatures, ugly and revolting in every way. Parts of Naples, away from the fashionable quarter, strongly remind one of the worst parts of Ramsgate, Folkestone, or Hastings. You might fancy yourself at either of those places, and this in front of that eternally lovely bay! If the creatures lived at Houndsditch, we might have fancied that their surroundings had demoralized them; but they never seem to look at anything but one another's heads, or into the filthy messes they are eating.

"The museum at Naples contains some of the finest sculpture in the world, to say nothing of the Pompeian relics, more interesting, perhaps, to the casual observer.

"On Friday we spent the day at Herculaneum and Pompeii. It was a long drive through Portici, and not a pretty one—filth and beggars all the way. We stopped at an inn to order luncheon; and while it was preparing we drove to the Pompeian Amphitheatre, which stands alone at present, on the outskirts of what was Pompeii—the greater part of which is still buried under volcanic ashes. And there stands the arena—not circular, as I had fancied, but elliptical—most of the stone seats still standing one above the other in long tiers. The dens of the animals, the waiting-room of the gladiators, might have been occupied yesterday! To a reader of Bulwer, how specially interesting!—the empty look of the place so often filled by eager thousands; the awful contrast between the stillness now, and the mingled roars of beasts, and men worse than beasts, that rose into the great sky thousands of years ago! Then there are the very seats, in the best part larger and more commodious, in which the aristocracy sat. Separate boxes for the ladies at the top (the women never sat with the men) were broken and grass-grown, but all so nearly complete, that a very little would restore the amphitheatre to its original condition. As we drove to it we passed on the side of the road what appeared to me a cluster of mud-hovels; very small, dirty, and drabby, roofless and miserable, without a vestige of color, or column, or statue; and a modern shed with new red tiles here and there, put up apparently to protect something. I looked. I heard the courier, whom everybody here treats with great respect and calls Signor Corriere, say: 'Dere you haf Pompeii, sir!' 'Well, of all the *sells* in the world!' we all exclaimed; and very foolish we were to be so rashly guided by first impressions, for the roofless, colorless place that Pompeii certainly seems at a distance, resolved itself, on nearer approach, into the most wonderful little city in the world; but it seems built for pigmies. The streets are eleven feet wide at their widest; the houses were never more than one story high, and they were all built on the same plan; but the frescoes and other decorations are very varied and beautiful.

"Our guide through the ruins was a Neapolitan soldier; and what with his comical French, and his still more comical manners, he kept us highly amused. He seemed to think what he had to describe ought to interest us as much as if he were showing the gates of heaven; and the way in which he said in English (the only words he could speak in that language) 'by and by, sare, by and by,' when we attempted to anticipate his narrative, was indescribable. He called me 'Mosseu' at every word, and was altogether inimitable in look, manners, and everything. I was surprised to find that not more than a third of the little city is uncovered; and the excavations are now going on with great vigor. Discoveries of deep interest are made every day; and as we wandered about we could see the workmen as busy as bees pickaxing away the lava and ashes, like a lot of English navvies. A friend of our conductor's said something to him that made him start; and he left us, only to return running and gesticulating like a madman. 'Mosseu, on a trouvay oone cadavre.' The deuce they have, thought I; that will be something to see. Fancy the thrilling interest with which I approached the excavations, and saw the men kneeling and carefully picking away the volcanic matter from the body of a woman so perfect that you could not only distinguish the sex, but you felt sure she had been beautiful! Anything more pathetic could not be conceived—a young mother with little children huddled about her; one hand covered her face, and with the other she had tried to protect a child from the pitiless shower of sulphurous ashes and boiling water that overwhelmed them in that awful time. She conveyed to me, as she lay there, the struggle she had made to escape, through darkness so dense—according to Pliny, who was in it—that people could not see each other, though they might be touching; and at last in despair had thrown herself down to die, and be concealed under the fatal ashes for eighteen centuries; then to be uncovered before the eyes of the present writer. I only saw the upper part of the body down to a little below the waist brought to light, the excavators telling us they were obliged to be so tender with their work that it might be many hours before the whole figure was revealed.

"Herculaneum is very like Pompeii, but the extent excavated is much smaller. Instead of the shower of ashes that overwhelmed Pompeii, lava, in some places thirty feet thick, had been poured upon Herculaneum; forming a surface hard as flint. The difficulty of removing such an obstruction may be imagined.

"The wonderful freshness of the Pompeian houses, as they are laid open to the light of day, is astonishing; and the things they find! On a plate were some walnuts, some cracked and opened, some whole; a bunch of grapes; three or four olives in a dish, one cut in half, and the knife lying by. As to the frescoes and inscriptions, they look as if they had just been executed.

"I must now take leave of Pompeii and return to Naples, from whence we took a drive along the bay to Baiæ, where we had an *al-fresco* lunch that was delightful. We drove up to an Italian inn—*albergo*, they call it —which has been uncommonly well imitated on the stage. We were conducted up some stairs, outside the house, to a terrace overlooking the sea, with the island of Capri in the distance. The landlord and landlady bustled about, just as they do at a theatre. I felt I was acting a part, and had only come on to the terrace from the side scenes.

"'What can we have to eat?'

"'Well, signor' (that's to myself), 'we can give you oysters from Lago—' something or other, to which he pointed—'or these fishes, noble sir, which were alive an hour ago.'

"'Serve the banquet,' said I to the *corriere*, who was interpreter, of course; and anything more enjoyable never was enjoyed.

"The landlord's eyes glistened, and his earrings twinkled with delight at our praises of his food, above all of the wine of his own growing.

"'Let the signor observe it is too early yet; if he will come later he will find the veranda, covering the terrace where he sits, a mass of grapes.'

"The signor leans over the balcony smoking. The landlord desires to know if the noble Englishman would like them to dance the Tarantella. 'Yes, that is what he would like.' So from some depth below come up two girls—helpers or servants of the inn, perhaps—with naked feet; and such dresses; about as unlike the stage as possible—very dirty, but such color! We could hear the rattle of the castanets as the dancers came upstairs, followed by the jolly landlady, who carried a huge tambourine. They set to work at once; they twisted, they wriggled, they poussetted opposite each other, swinging round and round; the castanets constantly crackling and keeping time to the tambourine. It was delightful to watch the supple, stayless figures peforming the national dance as if they enjoyed it to the full. When the performers were thoroughly out of breath we stopped them with some money, and took our leave of Baiæ and them.

"We returned to Rome from Naples, and from thence we went to Florence, *via* Perugia. The latter is a delicious place, thoroughly Italian, without Italian disagreeables. It is a very old city, wonderfully picturesque; with its quaint, time-worn buildings crowning one of the Umbrian hills, and overlooking the lovely valley, or, rather, valleys, of the

Tiber. Of the view from my window I despair of giving you an idea, so utterly unlike is it to anything you could see in England, or, indeed, anywhere but in Italy. Perhaps if you can fancy the view from Richmond Hill magnified and repeated a thousand times, stretching for scores upon scores of miles, you may get a faint idea; but where are the eternal Apennines to close up the distance? Where is the undulating country, huge wave after wave, like a mighty sea melting away into faint aërial distance, dotted with giant yew or fir trees, and the ever-lovely olive and vine—now and again with the little cities and scattered hamlets shining in sunlight?

"That gray clump at the foot of the snow-topped mountain, which you can just make out to be a city, though it looks as if you could cover it with your handkerchief, is Assisi, where we shall go presently. From my standpoint I fancy I can trace the source of the backgrounds in the pictures of Perugino, Raphael, and the rest of the Umbrian school; indeed, the resemblance of the landscape to that in the pictures, and the people to the artists' models, is palpable. As to Messieurs Cimabue, Giotto, and even Perugino, I fear I must confess I am sick of them. There is an undoubted earnestness, begot of belief, that amounts at times to solemnity, and gives to what these men did an air of simple truth that is greatly to be admired; but it is conveyed to you through the medium of such imperfect art, such infantine attempts to produce what is shown in such perfection in later times, that what is meant to be solemn is often ludicrous, and simplicity is pushed into tameness and insipidity; in fact, these pictures are *curiosities*, and not works of art at all in the true sense of the term.

"We drove to Assisi—such a drive!—and saw the famous church, or rather churches, for the immense pile consists of three churches built over one another; the whole covering the canonized bones of St. Francis of Assisi, the remarkable person who preached to a congregation of birds. The decorations in the upper church are entirely the work of Giotto; and though they are in a sadly perished condition, the subjects can still be traced. In one large fresco you find St. Francis—represented in his youthful days—so misconducting himself that his father thought he was mad, and seemed on the point of giving him a good thrashing for not attending to his work, when an angel appears and informs the old gentleman of the future destiny of his son. The old man, who is full of character, looks at the angel with a kind of 'Can I believe my eyes' expression; mixed with a look which conveyed to me the notion that the appearance of the supernatural figure was suspected to be a trick of Francis's—who looks an idle dog—to frighten his father. However, the stern parent's heart is softened, his hand is stayed; and Francis goes into the world and proceeds to heal sick people, and cast out the ugliest devils that were ever seen in this world or any other. Francis sees as many visions as he pleases; has the most familiar intercourse with the heavenly choir, from the principal personages down to the smallest cherub; and finally succeeds in deluding himself, and millions of others, into absolute belief in such follies—a belief which they proceeded to prove to all the world by placing over the body of this weak-minded, hysterical monk a dream in stone, too lovely for words; every inch of it colored and carved with a thoroughness and a beauty that nothing but *faith* could bring about; but faith in what? —a series of impostures or self-delusions, or perhaps both.

"From my youth up I had been told by the happy people fresh from Italy of the treasures in Florence. 'Until you have seen the Uffizi and the Pitti Galleries,' said my travelled friends, 'you know nothing of the powers of Raphael, Titian, and Correggio, to say nothing of the smaller masters.' My delight in finding myself in Florence may be imagined; though the hotel was so thronged that we were consigned to the third floor, my bedroom being so close to a bell-tower that I could almost touch it. Florence seems to have hundreds of such towers—seldom silent—so the chances of rest in their vicinity are remote; it was therefore after a somewhat sleepless night that I paid my first visit to the Uffizi Palace.

"In the tribune stands 'the statue that enchants the world.' I confess I am not of that world, for I think the figure affected and idealized till nature has almost left it. I had drawn from it often; and the more I knew of my art and of the Venus de' Medici, the less I thought of the latter, and the more surprised I was at its reputation: its sister Venus of Milo immeasurably surpasses it in every quality. Close by the Medicean Venus hangs that of Titian. A lovely reclining figure, said to be a portrait of the mistress of one of the Dukes d' Urbino. This picture displays every charm of art in absolute perfection. The Uffizi Gallery bristles with splendid specimens of all the great masters. Raphael's Circular Madonna, with the holy Child, smiles at you as the baker's daughter smiled upon the painter; but the rapt expression of the San Sisto picture, which conveys to you the impression that the 'most blessed among women' is entirely absorbed in the consciousness of her awful destiny—is absent from the Madonna della Seggiola, who is but a lovely mother, caressing a no less lovely child. Here we have one of the few specimens of Botticelli that my feeble powers enable me to appreciate. I think I feel fully the beauties of the Uffizi picture, which equals, if it does not surpass, the three angels in our National Gallery—a work that always gives me exquisite pleasure. But this master so often disfigures his pictures by bad drawing and worse painting, and by such a revelling in ugliness—notably seen in his 'Venuses' in our collection—as to make it a matter of wonder to me how admirers can be found for them."

But I must hurry away from Florence, and again draw upon letters written at the time from my experiences of Italian travel:

"HOTEL DANIELI, VENICE, *May* 11, 1875.

"Here I am in Venice—such a Venice, going infinitely beyond all I could have conceived of it in exquisite beauty! Instead of a cab at the station, I took a gondola. Two Italians, just like organ-grinders in London, one at the prow, the other at the stern, urged the black, hearselike thing swiftly and silently along the water streets; past masses of gorgeous palaces, and marble churches, with the most exquisite tracery of delicious architectural detail that the mind of poet ever conceived. Such color, lighted up here and there by the evening sun, and such associations connected with every place!

"'What bridge is that?'

"'The Rialto.'

"'And the smaller one, under which we have just passed?'

"'That, signor, is the Ponte dei Sospiri.'

"I had scarcely time to note the doge's palace on the one side, and the awful prison, with its rusted, clamped, trebly-barred, niched windows on the other, before we were out into the wide lagoon; and, seeming to float in the glorious light, was the Church of the Salute with its attendant lovely surroundings."

"*May* 13.

"The Princess of Prussia is in this hotel, and the Venetians improvised a water *fête* on the Grand Canal in honor of the royal visit. I did not intend to have assisted at it, but a friend who had challenged me in the picture-galleries had hired a boat, and it required very little pressure to induce me to take a place in it; and we soon found our gondola making one among scores of others, most of them decorated with paper lanterns of every conceivable form.

"We glided silently about, waiting for a big barge which presently appeared; a mass of light and flowers, in the midst of which was a military band and chorus-singers from the opera. We on the gondolas surrounded and followed the barge as it moved almost imperceptibly along; the music from the instruments rising up into the quiet air, thrilling and enchanting us. We paused opposite this hotel in honor of the princess; and then the human voices, in what seemed to me delicious accord, broke in upon the night; and as the last strains from the band died away, again we moved slowly in a serried mass. The figures of the gondoliers as they bent to their work, now cutting dark against a mass of light, now lighted into brilliancy as a blue or red light showed them up as clearly as the brightest sun. I don't exaggerate when I say that we were so jammed together that you might have walked dryshod from one side of the Grand Canal to the other; and though I constantly found the bright steel prow of a gondola close to my arm, or to my back, such was the wonderful skill of the fellows that a violent blow never struck a boat, much less a human being, the whole night through; though at times the crowding would have alarmed the timid.

"At our approach every detail of delicate tracery of some splendid palace would be artificially lighted, seeming to welcome us. The steps of the churches blazed with blue and red fire; hundreds of faces lighted into a ruddy glow, or a ghastly blue from the whiter light; then all on shore dark again. Still we move slowly on, the music swells and echoes up the side canals; and all the while the quiet moon looks down upon us with her usual inscrutable indifference to all that goes on below. It was getting very late, so we left the procession at the Rialto, and went to our hotel.

"The Academy at Venice contains the generally admitted *chef-d'œuvre* of Tintoretto, the 'Miracle of St. Mark,' and the 'Great Assumption' by Titian, both works bestowing immortality—in this world—on their producers. I should be wearisome if I were to name a tithe of the great works that honor Venice. In no other place are you able thoroughly to gauge the powers of Paul Veronese and Tintoretto, that unapproached and unapproachable pair. Titian, too—though a lamentable fire destroyed the 'Peter Martyr,' one of his grandest pictures, if we may judge by good copies from it—displays all his strength; unfortunately too often impaired by the bad light in the churches, and by the height over the altars where the sacred pictures have been hanging since the time of their production. The doge's palace contains splendid examples of Paul Veronese, notably the 'Europa,' which looks as fresh as if it had been painted yesterday. To those who have never seen Venice it is impossible to impart the sensation with which one finds one's self standing on the marble steps from whence the head of Marino Faliero rolled from his shoulders; or with which one sees the crape-covered space in the long line of portraits of the doges, on which are inscribed his name and crime. I have walked on the Rialto, where Shylock was taunted by Antonio. I have stood in front of the empty seats of the Council of Ten, on the spot from which Othello addressed the 'potent, grave, and reverend signiors.' I have been on the Bridge of Sighs, and into the fearful prisons below; have seen the exact spot where the headless bodies of the two Foscari were dropped into the secret water—and never, so long as 'memory holds her seat,' can these things pass from me.

"I am familiar with the works of the Bolognese school, and, though familiarity has not bred contempt, it has failed to create admiration; and, as I was told that I could not judge the painters fairly without seeing them in their full strength at Bologna, leaving my family in Venice, I proceeded thither in charge of an excellent courier, Gustave, of whom I may take this opportunity of giving a little account. Gustave Zimmermann, a Swiss by birth, a courier by profession, is a wiry man; iron-gray, rather thin, above middle height, and about fifty years old. He has a sharp, irritable face, a long upper lip, curving outward in the middle, and nice teeth; with a laugh rather too much like the grin of a monkey. His nostrils are set at sharp angles at the end of his nose, and they dilate and turn outward in a way that denotes the irritability of temper to which he is certainly subject; and if we get home without some of these Italian fellows sticking a knife into him, I shall be glad. To see him and them gesticulate over half a franc is a sight! He leaves the extortioners with his eyes flashing, muttering: 'Damn rascals! damn tiefs! Dese fellows, dey tink you come into deir damn country joost to put your hands into your pockates and giff dem all you have got; dat is what dey tink you have come for, damn rogues!'

"One of our party was always alarmed, and not unnaturally, at some of the perilous-looking points of our precipitous drives; and Gustave's delight at the terror—and his demoniac grin as he says, 'Ah! miss is not comfortable; ah! dere is no fear, no danger'—should have been reprobated instead of encouraged by our laughter. Then he would say, 'Now we are joost coming to a terrib' place, where a lady and a leetel child were both keeled;' and his demoniac smile spreads over his monkey-face.

"I do not think Gustave's determination to take me into every church in every town we visit arises from the promptings that usually take people to church; for I fear he has no settled belief of any kind. He hates priests and despises relics; often saying, 'What a power dose fellows haf over de poor people to get money out of dem! Look at dose marples; what dey must haf cost! and den to hombogue de people with dose kind of tings!'—flying at the relics with which the churches abound.

"His broken English is irresistible. He calls the Virgin, the Wirgin; the government, the gowernament; and 'dose kind of tings' is a comprehensive phrase that he uses to avoid details, as well as to express contempt.

"When we were at Naples he told me I must go and see Wurgle's grave.

"'Who on earth is Wurgle?' said I.

"'Well, you see, he—he wass—he wass a boet, or some of dose sort of tings.'

"'A poet—a poet,' I repeated to myself; 'why, you must mean Virgil.'

"'Yaas, yaas; that is what I say.'

"On the occasion of a visit to one of his favorite churches, when he would stand with his 'Murray,' and read to us in slow, broken English, I asked him about a picture of a Martyrdom that he and I were looking at. He did not hear me distinctly, or else did not understand my inquiry, for he said, mistaking the word 'martyrdom:'

"'Who has *murtered dem*, ah? I cannot say dat. I should tink dey haf murtered one another.'

"I must now take leave of Gustave Zimmermann, giving only one more instance of 'English as she is spoke' by him. On the evening of our arrival at an Italian inn, before going to bed, Gustave came for the usual order for next morning's breakfast. Soles were decided upon. I took my ordinary walk in the hotel garden before breakfast. Presently our trusty courier approached me and said, in solemn tones, 'Dere is no soles—dere is only *whitening*.'"

"BOLOGNA, *May* 15.

"The brothers Caracci, with Guido and Guercino, were the most prominent members of the Bolognese school; indeed, they were the founders of it, and an ugly school it is—coarse, big, exaggerated, and black. Their works gave me little or no pleasure. Guido is certainly a stronger man than I thought him; but after Titian, Paul Veronese, and Tintoretto, he and his school 'pale their ineffectual fire.' Bologna—a part of one of whose sausages we had for our luncheon yesterday—is a quaint old place. The first impression it makes upon you, as you drive to your hotel, is that it is all arcades and arches; for in front of every house in all the streets is a broad pavement, arched over to keep pedestrians in continual shade, I suppose; so you seem to drive through miles of Regent Street Quadrant (since done away), with the difference that at Bologna the columns are connected with each other by arches. There are some fine churches, but I resolutely refused to enter them, as they could not boast of pictures worth a visit."

I rejoined my family at Venice, and left for Milan, on our way to the Italian lakes, which we reached on the 22d of May. I write:

"We left Milan on the afternoon of Tuesday, and took the steamer at Como, a place at the foot of the lake of that name, and in two or three hours we traversed the larger and better part of it. The mountains are covered with mulberry, olive, and other trees rising abruptly from the edge of the water; they are of every variety of size and form, and as you approach or recede from them they assume colors varying from the most velvety green to tender, pearly, delicate gray. Towns and villages are scattered here and there on the edges of the lake, and sometimes climb a little way up the mountains, which seem to shelter and protect them. Right and left of you open up the most lovely bays and nooks, sometimes stretching for miles; in short, enchantment prevails in this favored spot. Add to the beauty of the scenery the most balmy air; with sunlight which seems to brighten and penetrate everything, in a way quite unfamiliar to our befogged eyes; the loveliest flowers growing in profusion everywhere—all vegetation in the full summer swing of England—fancy all this, and you will get a faint notion of the charms of Como. As to Maggiore, where we are now, it is the realization of a poet's dream; the view from the window of this room would satisfy the longings of the most romantic dreamer, and would exceed all that he could weave out of his excited brain.

"I can see many miles straight ahead over the lake, and my view is bounded by mountains wrapped in a delicious, gray, moving mist. Right and left of these, mountains again—jagged, sugar-loafed, pyramidal—each casting its neighbor into partial shade. Here and there towns with their tall campanili, looking not unlike rough agates set in emerald, at the mountains' feet; then the lake like burnished steel, and then the islands! Isola Bella, Pescatori, Isola Madre, and others, dotted here and there on the surface of the water; with the white houses and the dark cypresses reflected in the depths below them. Gustave's promise as we steamed by the rugged shores of Lake Lugano—before Maggiore burst upon us in all its glory—that 'You shall now see someting, dere is such mountains and heels and walleys, and dose sort of tings,' was more than realized."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BEARDED MODEL.

I believe I speak elsewhere of its having been my practice, after going through a rather severe course of drawing from the antique, to scour the streets in search of models, from whom I made studies in oil the size of life. I had painted Italian organ-boys—who always went to sleep—chair-menders, knife-grinders, and many others, when the desire possessed me to seek for a man, an old one if possible, who wore a full beard. Fifty years ago long beards were as rare as a shaven face is likely to be in a few years from this time. Mustaches, except on the lips of military men, were considered signs of foppery and general want of principle. The head of a well-known firm of drapers in Regent Street refused to take a shopman who wore mustaches, or men who parted their hair down the middle. And to this day the employees at one of the great banks in the Strand are compelled to be clean shaven. To illustrate this, I may instance the case of an old servant of the bank, who was attacked severely by erysipelas in the face and head. Even after convalescence the tenderness of the skin made shaving impossible, but the old clerk begged to be allowed to return to his desk. He was told by one of the principals, in a kind note in answer to his application, that the bank would endeavor to get on without him until his face was in a condition to bear the attention of his razor.

Another example I well remember was that of a book-illustrator, named Stuart, who, according to his own notion, ought to have been on the throne of England instead of drawing on insensible wood-blocks. He could trace his descent from James I. He could sing Jacobite songs, and very well, too, and he was certainly very like Charles I.

There was not the least doubt about his pedigree, in his own mind; and he was such a nuisance when once launched into the long list of proofs of his royal blood that we declared our unanimous conviction of the justice of his claims, and implored him to put them forward in the proper quarter, as we were powerless in the matter. The Stuart beard, exactly like Vandyke's portrait of Charles, was the treasured ornament of our friend's face, and though he was assured that the publishers felt such a doubt of his abilities, and such a conviction of his utterly unreliable character and general dishonesty in consequence of his beard (one man going so far as to tell him it cost him two hundred a year), he refused to remove it.

In due course the Vandyke-brown beard became streaked with silver, then quite white, and our poor friend became poor indeed, and would have died in extreme poverty had he not received well-deserved assistance from a fund established to meet cases like his.

It will be pretty clear, if what I have said is true, as it most assuredly is, that the difficulty of finding a bearded model would be great; and for some time I was baffled, until one day, when crossing Soho Square, my attention was drawn to a crowd of little boys, who seemed to be teasing an old man in the manner of the London street boy.

"Why don't you go and get your 'air cut?" said one.

"Yah! where's your bundle of old clothes? yer ain't got 'em in that 'ere basket, 'ave you?" said another. "Let's 'ave a look? You're a Jew, you know—now ain't you?" and so on.

All this because the old man wore a long gray beard, then such a rarity. The young gentlemen had mistaken their man in more senses than one. He was not a Jew, nor was he the feeble creature that he looked; for, as I reached the group, he had taken two of the biggest boys, one in each hand, and was knocking their heads together till they yelled in a key delightful to hear. He was a little out of breath as he threw them head over heels on to the pavement, but soon recovered, and, picking up his basket, turned to me and asked me if I wanted any apples, at the same time opening his basket and showing me his stock. This was my chance, and I proceeded to take advantage of it. I did want a great many apples, and if he would bring some to an address I gave him, he would find me a good customer. The old man, whose name I found was Ennis, kept his appointment, and was shown into my painting-room.

There was a slight look of alarm at the semi-darkened room, the high window, and the lay figure, to which he gave a very wide berth. An individual who is as ignorant of the requirements of art as my apple-merchant was, must be approached with much caution. A too hasty avowal of my intentions had on several occasions placed me in positions of difficulty, not to say danger. A picturesque orange-girl, after using unquotable language, threatened me with the police; and an Irishwoman, whose face would have been a fortune to me, told me that I was an impudent young ruffian, and the sooner I "made myself scarce" the better it would be for me. I found Ennis was of Irish extraction, and there was an expression in his eye that acted like a danger-signal. After buying apples enough to satisfy him, I tried to interest him in some of the *bric-à-brac* common to an artist's studio.

"What's that thing?"

"That," said I, "is called a fez. It's what people wear in the East instead of a hat."

"How rum!"

"It's very comfortable, mind you," said I. "Just you put it on."

No sooner said than done, and the old man took an admiring look at himself in my cheval glass. I fully shared his admiration, for the dull red of the cap, the furrowed face, and the silvery beard made a study that Rembrandt would have relished, and to which none but that genius could do full justice. The sale of his stock had put my man into good-humor, and I ventured to ask him how old he was.

"How old? I don't know."

"When is your birthday—I suppose you have one?"

"No, I ain't."

"Were you born in Ireland?"

"No—Kent—'opping-time; that's all I know about it. My father and mother was Irish; come over 'opping."

"Did you ever have your likeness taken?"

"Yes, once, when I was a boy. A deaf gent done it; leastways he had a trumpet, and I shouted at 'im."

"A deaf man?" (Gracious goodness, could it be Reynolds!) "What kind of man was he—where did he live?"

"What kind of man? Ah! it's a vast of years ago, you see, and I didn't take particular notice. Civil spoken he was, and gave me a kind of crook to hold."

"Can't you remember where he lived?"

"No, I forget."

"Now, Ennis," said I, "do you mind telling me what profit you make in a day by selling apples?"

"Well, you see—you haven't got a drop of spirits handy, have you? I think I have a kind of chill; but I'm used to that. It ain't only apples. Every morning of my life—except Sundays, and I'd go then if I could—I goes at daylight, four in summer, seven in winter, to Common Garden Market, and buys things, sometimes one thing and sometimes another, vegetables and that; and some days I makes a profit, and some days I doesn't. You've heard of the Gordon Riots, ain't you? Ah! I was in them; it was in the year seventeen hundred and eighty, that was."

"Have another glass of the rum; it is very old, and won't hurt you."

"Old it is—right you are, sir—like me; but all the better for that. Well, as I was a-saying, them riots. I'd been to the market, and when I come away to go 'ome to my breakfast, which my daughter always give me; she's gone too, long ago—I lives along with my great-granddaughter now—I walks along with the crowd till we come to a street—I forget the name on it—and there was a lot of soldiers a-standing in a line; and if you'll believe me, just as we was all pushing about in front of 'em—I was all of a confusion, and didn't know hardly what I was a-doing of, pushed about here and there—the soldiers up with their guns and fires bang into the middle of us. Some of 'em near me tumbles about as if they was drunk. The soldiers had shot a lot of 'em, and why they didn't shoot me I never could make out to this day. Well, sir, I was pretty strong then, and I ain't weak now, as you see by them boys in the square as was insulting of me. So I shoves my way back among the people, till I see a sort of entry kind of place into a little sort of street, and I gets in there, where I could see no soldiers, nor didn't want to; and I makes up my mind just to wait till things was quiet again. Well, would you believe me, there came some carpenter-looking chaps with boards and things, and they barricaded up both ends of this 'ere passage. What they done it for I dun know. They offered to let me out, but I says, 'No, thank you,' for I knew there was soldiers at both ends. So there I was all that precious day, and my daughter a-crying and a-wondering what had become of me. All day long I could hear the mob a-yelling and a-roaring — things thrown out o' windows seemingly. There, I never heard nothing like it before nor since; and I that hungry! If I'd had apples, or oranges, or carrots, or turnips, or anything I could eat in my basket that day —I'd stuck to my basket, mind you; but what do you think it was what I had got from the market that morning? Why, artichokes, and they ain't good to eat; leastways, not raw."

"Another glass of rum, Ennis, eh? No? well, half one."

"Thank you kindly, sir. Well, them carpenter chaps come at dark and took down their boards, and lets me out; and one of 'em says, 'Look here, young chap, where do you live?' and I up and told him. And says he, 'You'll have to go roundabout, for there's lots of soldiers a-camped out,' he says, 'in the streets, and they won't let nobody pass nowhere.' 'All right, and thank you,' says I. So I shoulders my basket, and you may believe me or not, I passed by places that had been burnt out — fine houses they was, and crowds standing staring at 'em—but I takes no notice, and home I goes, and up-stairs I goes, and shoves my basket under my bed, where I always puts it till I goes out to sell in the morning; and my daughter give me my breakfast and supper all in one."

The rum, and the red cap, and a little flush on the withered cheeks, the old lips and beard a little quivering in the excitement of his story, made up a picture that I so longed to try my hand at that I plunged into the real business of the day.

"Now look here, Ennis," said I, "you have not told me what your time is worth to *you;* but I will tell you what it is worth to *me,* if you will give me the chance of taking your likeness with that red cap on your head. I will give you five shillings for three hours of your time."

This demand plunged my friend into deep contemplation. He seemed to be trying to remember something.

"No," he said, after a pause, "I couldn't take it off; I should get cold. No more I couldn't none of my clothes."

"Take what off?" said I.

"This 'ere beard," he said, handling it. "You see, my hand got a bit shaky, and I was always a-cutting of myself. One morning my granddaughter screeched out that I had cut my throat."

"Goodness, no!" I interrupted; it's your *beard* I want beyond everything."

"Oh, all right then! You'll want my coat and waistcoat and shirt off, as the deaf gent did, and you see I was young then and didn't mind it; but I should get the rheumatics or something. No, I couldn't do it."

"Bless the man! I don't want you to take off any of your clothes. I only want just to take your likeness—that is, the likeness of your face."

"Oh, is that all? Then why did the old gent make me take off all but my trousers, and give me a crook to hold? There was a lamb in the picture as the old gent done. If you should want a lamb to set, a friend of mine, a butch—"

"No, no; it's you I want, and neither lamb nor butcher."

"Well, sir" (after more consideration), "I see no harm in it—five bob for three hours. You won't mind throwing in a glass or two of that rum? You see, I'm subject to a chill, and sitting still is apt to bring it on."

Upon this happy conclusion a day was fixed for the first sitting.

Painters of the present generation do not, except in rare instances, admire the work of Sir Thomas Lawrence; and they would scarcely credit the influence which that artist exercised over the minds and practice of the young men of my early days. 'Tis true he had been dead six or seven years before I began my profession; but his spirit seemed to be among us, guiding us generally, I think, in a wrong direction. At any rate, I managed to copy some of his worst faults very successfully, and one or two of my fellow-students followed my example. It is not surprising, then, that I contrived to give a flavor of Lawrence to my rendering of old Ennis. I flattered him, I made him smile. I put those liquid touches into his eyes that Lawrence found in all eyes; and although I confess I did not see them in my old man, they ought to have been there, and there they are accordingly to this day.

I wish I could remember much of the old man's talk, but memory betrays me. 1838 was the year he first sat for me: he could not have been less than eighty years old, probably some years more. He remembered when umbrellas "came in wogue"—what that year was I don't know; he also picked blackberries in the Oxford Road (now Oxford Street), opposite to the building formerly known as the Pantheon. I recommended him as a model (a business to which he never took kindly) to many of my fellow-students, especially to Douglas Cowper; but it is with my own rendering of him that I have to do. As I have said, I made many life-studies for practice, and as soon as they were done and fresh canvas was required, I sent them to an auction-room, kept by one Jones, where, if they sold for what they were worth, public estimation of them was not extravagant, for the best of them never realized more than a few shillings, and Ennis, fez and all, sold for four and ninepence. Well do I recollect the precise sum, because I bought a hat with it. Four-and-ninepenny hats may be remembered by elderly people, who may have been more fortunate in their purchases than I was. The first shower of rain finished mine; perhaps it was not a good one. Those hats, no doubt, varied in excellence, like other things. It was very shiny, and till the wet weather I was envied by the envious. The hat disappeared very soon indeed after the picture; the former I never saw again, the latter—or what turned out to be a copy of it—greeted my wandering eyes in a picture-shop in York four years afterwards. My first impression was that I looked upon my own work; I recognized the fez, the gray beard, the smile (which seemed to have increased a good deal), and all the rest of it; but a nearer inspection proved to me that the picture was a copy, and somewhat smaller than the original.

"What is the price of the old man with the gray beard, in the window?"

"Two guineas, sir."

"Pray who is it by?"

"By Mr. Rivers, of Hull, sir. We have had several of them from him; they sell readily."

"What! for two guineas apiece?"

"Oh dear, yes, sir. They are good sound works of art; we can recommend them. Considered in the Lawrence style, sir."

Strange coincidence! Rivers was a schoolfellow, and is now an old friend of mine. I knew he was an artist, practising in Hull, and from letters received from him from time to time, I gathered that he was immortalizing aldermen, merchants, sea-captains, and others. Why, then, copy my picture? How and where did he get it? Did he know the author of it? These questions I couldn't answer, and the whole matter passed out of my mind. About a year after my vision of the fez and the gray-bearded old man in the York picture-shop, my friend Rivers called on me in London. I returned his call, and found him pleasantly located in the artist quarter in Newman Street, where the high windows cut up into the third floor may still be seen. I was shown into his studio, and the first object that met my astonished gaze was my picture of "Ennis Effendi," magnificently framed, in a place of honor over the chimney-piece. Rivers came in as I was studying my own work. After the customary greetings, and expressing the real pleasure with which I welcomed him to London, my sincere wishes for his success, and so on, my eyes again wandered to the red cap and the gray beard.

"Ah, my boy," said Rivers, "that's a fine thing, isn't it?"

"Pretty well. Who is it by?"

"*Pretty well!*" with contempt. "You are a nice fellow to call a head like that '*Pretty well.* Who is it by?' You ought to know who it's by!"

"Well, I do," thought I; but I said:

"It looks to me like an imitation of Lawrence."

"An imitation? Do you mean to tell me that anybody but Lawrence could have painted those eyes? Now, do look at them close. Here, get upon that chair. Oh! you won't hurt the chair; besides, it isn't mine. Proof enough for you, if you know anything of Lawrence's work, and you ought to know; besides, look here, I have a warranty that I got with it, when I bought it in Newcastle. Here you are. Something Effendi. I can't quite read the name —an old fellow in the suite of one of those swells that Lawrence painted abroad."

I was really sorry to dispel my old friend's illusion; but there was no help for it.

"Lawrence, eh?" said I. "The devil a bit; I painted it myself. It's a portrait of an old fellow I found selling apples in the street."

Rivers knew me too well to doubt what I said. He was dumfounded for a moment. He then said:

"Do—you" (a pause between each word)—"mean to say—that you—painted—that—picture? Why, I have made at least six copies of it, and sold them for thirty shillings apiece." Then, after another pause, "All I have got to say is, that the sooner you paint some more pictures like it, the better, for it goes a deuced sight beyond anything of yours that I have ever seen."

After this dreadful blow Rivers confessed that he could no longer bear the sight of his Lawrence. He soon sold it; and the subject, a very sore one to him, was never recurred to again.

Ennis never became what is called a regular model. He was easily offended; and a refusal to buy an unreasonable quantity of apples, or a doubt expressed of their excellence, would produce a prompt refusal to sit on any terms.

Douglas Cowper, who was far ahead of the rest of us, spoiled the old man very much. He overpaid him, and made himself ill with oranges and apples; but what was most delightful to the vain old creature, was the deference which Cowper pretended to pay to his criticisms, affecting to tone down here, and brighten there, under the direction of the aged critic.

It was in the days of Ennis that I attempted my first composition. His venerable appearance, as I have said elsewhere, suggested Scott's "Last Minstrel," and a dreadful minstrel I made of him—the wicked old man jeering at my efforts, and throwing Cowper at my head constantly.

He never pronounced a name correctly. I was "Thrift," Cowper was "Cowpin," Bridges was "Bridgen," and so on.

"Why, you've made me look a hundred; and I ain't as ugly as that, I know. Jest you see what Cowpin done of me in his piece." (He called our works "pieces" generally, "picturs" sometimes.)

I had but just completed my "Minstrel," when the old man died. His great-granddaughter, who always accompanied him in his latter days to "Common Garden," told me that Ennis stopped suddenly on his homeward journey one morning, put down his basket, and said, "My lass, I'm struck with death!"

He managed to crawl feebly home, lay down on his bed, and in a few hours he was dead.

I shall not let the fear of being charged with blowing my own trumpet deter me from relating here the ultimate fate of my friend Rivers' picture, "Ennis Effendi." The public became slowly aware of his merits, and a bold connoisseur gave between forty and fifty guineas for him at Christie's, where he bore the real name of his author, and he is now settled in perpetuity—for he is an heirloom in a fine mansion near Grosvenor Square, with his history recorded on his back.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"THE ROAD TO RUIN."

My Italian trip is over. A rapid run to Paris *via* Turin, a sight of the Salon Exhibition—and a sorry sight it was—and I find myself at home and at work again. My foreign travel may be credited, or discredited, with two pictures—one, the more important, being a subject suggested by a visit to the dungeons below the doge's palace; the other by a sudden attack made upon me one morning by a flower-seller, when I was taking my usual early walk on the Cascine at Naples. Before I could recover from my surprise, my young assailant had seized me by my coat-collar and planted in one of its buttonholes a bright little nosegay. Remonstrance was out of the question. I must ransom myself, and I did so by paying a price which, judging from the smile with which it was received, and the "Thank you, excellenza," was perfectly satisfactory. At last, thought I, here is a subject—trifling enough—by which I can fulfil my long-standing promise to my old Scottish friend, who, as my readers may remember, bargained for a picture, the important feature of which must be my own portrait; and my likeness is "now added"—to quote Madame Tussaud—to a "chamber of horrors," or a charming collection, as the taste and judgment of beholders may determine. The more important picture was a more serious effort. No thoughtful visitor to those dreadful dungeons in Venice can fail to people them with imaginary victims, political and social. My thoughts took the shape of an unfounded charge of social crime, of which a beautiful woman should be the victim. A monk stands in the narrow passage close to the window of her cell, at which he attends to hear the innocent prisoner's confession. The lady, whose patrician dress proclaims her rank, seizes the bars, and, with her face pressed against them, pours into the ear of the monk, not a confession, but a passionate protest of her innocence, together with an imploring appeal for deliverance. The confessor listens with a mixed expression of incredulity, sympathy, and helplessness; knowing too well how slight are the chances of innocence escaping, when Italian power and passion have determined to punish. I had arranged my composition, settled the position and attitude of the monk, and progressed to my satisfaction with the female figure, when I found myself in trouble for the monk. I was refused a model from a monastery in London, and at my wits' end, when a strange event occurred. My readers will find in my story of "The Pious Model"—in a former chapter of these reminiscences—how he went to Australia and established a store for the sale of religious literature at Ballarat. From the day of my receiving Mr. Bredman's letter containing that interesting announcement, over a quarter of a century of silence had passed, so far as any intelligence of that worthy had reached me. My surprise may be imagined when my servant informed me that "a person of the name of Bredman, who says he sat to you a long time ago, would like to see you." "Let him in," said I, and in came my pious friend. The five-and-twenty years had scarcely touched him. Not a streak of gray in his shiny black hair, hardly a wrinkle added to his Chadband face; but his outward man, how changed! Instead of the greasy fustian jacket of old, and the trousers patched to such an extent that the original material was difficult to distinguish, the whole man was sheathed in a suit of shining black. My old model offered me his hand, and I took it rejoicing, for I had found a model for my monk.

"Well, Bredman, I am really glad to see you. I need not ask you how you are; but what does that suit of black mean? You are not wearing it in mourning for any one, I hope."

"Yes, I am, sir; I've come to England to take a legacy. Two hundred pounds comes to me from my father-in-law; very old man, just dead."

"Your *wife's* father?" said I, laying peculiar stress on the word "*wife.*"

"Yes, sir," said Bredman, with the old smile.

"Large family, Bredman?" I inquired, also with my old smile.

"Well, that's as may be, sir; I think it was large enough—nine of 'em. We lost two—seven left."

"Why, this is worse than the first wife, Bredman—eh?"

No reply, but a broader smile.

"Now is this little account true, or is it like the other? Is there a real wife and family this time, Bredman?"

"Yes, sir; upon my word, it is all right this time. My sons are in the Bush, doing well, all of 'em" ("I trust not bushranging," was my mental comment); "my daughters married pretty middling, too."

"And you—what has been your business?"

"Oh, one thing and another. I was town-crier at Melbourne for some years; and now I am under-steward on board an Australian liner: attends to the ladies and gents—pays well when they're ill; cleans boots and such. But now I shall be in London for some months till this law business is settled, and should be very glad of some sitting."

An engagement was made. Bredman proved that his old qualities as a model had not degenerated; nor did I find him attempting any of his old tricks. I employed him for other pictures, and he makes one among the betting-men in the picture I afterwards painted of "The Royal Enclosure at Ascot," one of the series called "The Road to Ruin."

I christened my Venetian picture "Under the Doge's Palace," and it was exhibited in 1876. My other contributions to the Exhibition of 1876 were: "A Scene from the 'Vicar of Wakefield'—The Squire teaching the Young Ladies Picquet and the Boys to Box," which illustrates the following quotation: "The intervals between conversation were employed in teaching my daughters picquet, or sometimes in setting my two little ones to box—to make them sharp, as he called it." An illustration of Molière, and a small picture called "The Lovers' Seat," completed my list.

About this time a committee was formed to make arrangements for the production of a statue of Lord Byron, to be paid for by public subscriptions, and placed in a prominent position in London. I was asked to serve on the committee, and, with my friends Elmore and Woolner, formed the professional element in it. Our brother-committeemen were all distinguished individuals; by far the most interesting to me being Trelawney, a very old and striking-looking man, the well-known friend of Byron. The committee met in the classic rooms of Mr. Murray, in Albemarle Street, the courteous owner being also a member. To see the rooms so often honored by the presence of such men as Byron, Scott, and Moore—to say nothing of so many only less great—and to be surrounded by their portraits, was very delightful to me ; but to be talked to by Trelawney was more delightful still. He sat next to me on one occasion, and talked much of Byron ; frequently mentioning the elder Murray, whose son was well within earshot, as a capital fellow, liberal to a degree, and in Byron's case he found his honesty pay, "for Byron told me," said Trelawney, "that all he had received from Murray was between twenty and thirty thousand pounds—nearer twenty than thirty; and that Murray made over seventy thousand by Byron. Not bad business that —eh ?"

The result of the committee's work is known to all. Being in a minority—an adverse minority, indeed—the professional members of the committee can claim no credit for the selection of the sculptor, nor are they to be blamed if the statue is considered unsatisfactory. We were outvoted by gentlemen who were God-gifted with a knowledge of art which all our lives' devotion had failed to give us—in their opinion. Disraeli said "the critics are those who have failed in literature and art." With the judges of literary work I have no concern; but in respect of those whose business it is to write public criticisms on art, I have to say that few of the gentlemen or ladies who praise or condemn modern painters and sculptors have practised art in any form, so the charge of their having failed in it falls to the ground. They are people of some literary attainment, as is evident by their writing. But the mystery attending their wonderful knowledge of art in all its forms is one of those things—if I may use the words of that eminent peer, Lord Dundreary—"that no fellow can understand." When I bring to my memory the many instances of the diffidence in expressing opinion on art so often witnessed by myself in such men as Landseer, Turner, and others nearly as eminent, I cannot help being awe-struck by the laying down of the law by our modern experts. Infallibility is not monopolized by the pope; but what can be said for a public which is led by printed opinion expressed by persons who would not be listened to for a moment if their efficiency as judges could be gauged. If we could be judged by our peers, as literary men are, we should be profited, in all probability. What would writers say if a body of artists were employed to direct public taste in literary matters? Surely the two positions are equally absurd. I must now return to my own doings.

For a long time I had the desire to paint a story in a series of pictures, and I began to make chalk-studies of the different groups for the five pictures called "The Road to Ruin." Without any pretension to do my work on Hogarthian lines, I thought I could show some of the evils of gambling; my idea being a kind of gambler's progress, avoiding the satirical vein of Hogarth, for which I knew myself to be unfitted. I desired to trace the career of a youth from his college days to his ruin and death—a victim to one of the most fatal vices. In the first scene my hero is entertaining a party of friends in his college-room, who have played at cards all night. One of them, perhaps the youngest, has fallen asleep on a sofa, while the rest are still engaged in furious play. The window-curtain is drawn aside by one of the non-players, and the dawn is evident by the lighting up of the towers of an opposite college by the earliest rays of the sun. Another guest blows out a candle no longer needed. In the second picture my youth has grown to manhood, and is engaged in far more dangerous play than three-card loo; for he is the centre of attraction in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot to a horde of betting-men, who are offering him chance after chance of immediate or prospective ruin. That they have succeeded is made evident by the third of the series, where the young man is seen in his ancestral home—with his wife and children—in the hands of bailiffs who have arrested him for debt. An interval, more or less long, is supposed to elapse between the third and fourth acts, when we find him away from his native land endeavoring to earn a subsistence by writing plays; while his wife devotes herself to painting in water-colors in the hope of selling her work, and thus adding to their slender means. A French landlady presses for her rent, the wife appeals to the woman, and the husband is in despair. Matters are supposed to go from bad to worse, till at last, driven to desperation, my luckless hero is seen in the fifth and last picture fastening the door of a miserable attic, with an expression on his face that, assisted by a pistol ready to his hand, admits of but one interpretation—death by his own hand. For these different pictures careful chalk-drawings were made, groups rearranged, compositions changed; in fact, all the *thinking* part of the business was settled before the small oil-sketches were made. With this preliminary care, alterations in the final pictures are avoided, time is actually saved, and the work of the artist, undisturbed by changes—unavoidable without this care—is more likely to *endure* than those so often commenced without due study and precaution.

Being a worshipper of Shelley, and having read everything respecting him that came in my way, it was with great pleasure that I made the acquaintance of his son, Sir Percy Shelley, and his delightful wife, whose invitation to their house at Boscombe I eagerly accepted. It was not a matter of surprise to find a room full of Shelley relics: there is the wave-washed Æschylus found upon the drowned poet's body; likenesses of him in abundance; locks of his fair hair; and much of his manuscript, adorned here and there with pen-and-ink sketches which show great artistic power. There is the portrait of his wife, the daughter of Godwin, a rather ideal likeness of a lady I can well remember seeing at one of the *soirées* at the Royal Academy; another of her mother, by Opie; and one also of Godwin, by Northcote. I can trace a likeness to the poet in his son, who seems to inherit his father's love of the sea. It was at Sir Percy's table that I met Mr. Grantley Berkeley, a very original and amusing person, whose bachelor home, not far from Boscombe, was so contrived as to gratify its owner's sporting tastes, and also the tastes of those interested in past times, when the Berkeleys played conspicuous parts in their country's history. Here is the bed from Berkeley Castle in which Edward II. was done to an awful death; and round about the room were relics almost as interesting.

One life only stopped the way to wealth and title for Mr. Grantley Berkeley, the direct heir to the earldom of Fitzhardinge; death came to the aspirant, who died as he had lived, plain Grantley Berkeley.

Before I made the acquaintance of the Shelleys I had done a slight sketch of one of the love-scenes that took place between the poet and Mary Godwin in old St. Pancras Churchyard. I found the graveyard still in existence, and I found a tombstone that might have been the one on which so many passionate words were spoken; and on it I placed my figures. The Boscombe portraits were my authority for the likenesses, but I failed to realize my own idea of either of the personages. It would require powers far beyond mine to do justice to the theme I had chosen. I did my best, and subjected myself to a proverb which I fear can be justly applied to my performance.

In the year 1877 I did not contribute to the Annual Exhibition; the whole of that year being taken up in incessant work at the pictures of "The Road to Ruin." The difficulties in respect of models and material were increased by the variety of men, women, and matter required. Genius, as everybody knows, is often accompanied by grievous failings in one form or other; and the greater the genius the more glaring are the shortcomings. The artist's model in his or her highest development—for which genius is but a mild term—is not exempt from serious drawbacks. He "drinks," perhaps, and an indulgence in that luxury is apt to engender forgetfulness of engagements; or he comes to his work one hour late, but before he has recovered from a previous night's debauch: he is then either gloomy, with a tendency to impertinence, or he chatters till he distracts the unhappy man whose time has been wasted, and whose efforts to paint from a restless, fidgety creature leave a deplorable result. No matter, you have begun from the man, and you must finish from him; you are his victim, and you must endure and suffer much. But the worm turns at last, and then, having completed your figure, you remark:

"Now, Green, attend to what I am going to say. You are a perfect genius at sitting when you are all right; you tell capital stories, and you are generally respectful, but you drink."

"Drink, sir!" interrupts Mr. Green; "why, I am a teetotaler; I took the pledge some time since!"

"Very likely, and you most certainly broke it before you came to me the other day. Now if you come to me in that condition again, or if you fail once more in being punctual to the time named, you may bid farewell to any employment by me."

"All right, sir," says Green; but it was not all right, for the annoyance was repeated. I immediately sent Green about his business, and I have never seen him since. I here tell one of his stories, which was new to me.

A Scottish clergyman preached a series of sermons on the Miracles, and in one of them he took for his text the swallowing of the prophet Jonah by the whale. The reverend gentleman either took exception to the translation of the word "whale," or he affected to do so, for the purpose of showing his knowledge of varieties of fish; for after describing several, and showing in each case, from the construction of the creature, that swallowing a human being was a matter of impossibility, he then—evidently leading up to the usually received explanation of the miracle—discussed the shark, or the *shairk*, as he called it, as being the fish so highly honored. "But no," said the clergyman, it couldna be a shairk; the teeth of the creetur would have destroyed—"

"Ech, meenister," cried out an old woman who was sitting below the pulpit, "wasna the beast a whale?"

"A whale, a whale, ye blethering auld deevil! what do ye know about it? What do ye mean by taking the Word of God out of my mouth?"

Mr. Green stood to me for many figures in "The Road to Ruin," and I parted from him with real regret. I was obliged to discharge another of the higher order of model for a very different reason. Mr. Gloster was a young, good-looking fellow, who wrote an excellent hand—to use a common phrase—was well-read, intelligent, and incomprehensible. I am convinced the man was perfectly honest and sober; and the tone of his voice, his manner—when he was not disgustingly familiar—and his conversation, were those of a gentleman; and how it happened that he took up the business of a professional model, in preference to so many for which he was undoubtedly well fitted, I know not. He was very ready in assuming any expression or attitude that was explained to him, but he very much objected to difficult positions; and after enduring a pose a little painful for a short time he would say, with a deep groan:

"This is awful! Oh, you needn't laugh; just try it yourself, and see how you like it!"

The value of Mr. Gloster may be imagined when such an uncommon address as the above was endured patiently. The man put himself on a level with me at once, and at times his insolence was very difficult to bear. He told me he had no notion of social distinction—everybody was as good as anybody else; and he considered himself rather better. Artists wouldn't employ him if they didn't want him; and he shouldn't go to them if he didn't want them; and he didn't see what obligation there was on either side.

"Was he often without employment?"

"Yes, he was; and then he starved. If he got any money, he would spend it and have a jolly good dinner, and go without dinner next day."

"Wasn't that rather foolish?"

"No; and if it was, what had anybody got to do with it?—he didn't care," and so on.

The man tried me dreadfully; but—there again, I had begun several figures from him—he looked the gentleman, and wore the clothes I provided with an air impossible to the ordinary model, so I bore with him for a long time. It is my habit to employ the same model all day, providing him with dinner at noon; I gave instructions that sufficient food should always be supplied. No doubt the supply, as well as the kind of food, varied; but it was very difficult to please Mr. Gloster.

"Look here," he said to me one day, "this is a poor reward for standing in that infernal attitude all the morning. The servant must take me for a blackbird."

This pretty speech because there was rather less meat than usual. The last feather that kills the camel came at last, and it was in this way:

My servant brought Gloster a large plateful of cold veal for his dinner. I saw it, and said:

"Well, they have given you enough to eat this time."

"Yes," said the man, "there's a lot of it. I hate veal, particularly cold veal! If there had been anything I like down-stairs, I should have had little enough of it. I say" (to the servant, who was leaving the room), "can't you get me some bacon, or pickles, or something to give this stuff a relish?"

"No," said the girl, "I can't."

"Now," said I, "Mr. Gloster, do you know that if you had to deal with some painters they would have turned you out of their rooms for such a speech as that?"

"Ah! I dare say they are precious fools, some of them; but you are not one."

He was mistaken—I was; and from that day to this I have never set eyes on Mr. Gloster; though I hear of him occasionally, and his reign everywhere seems short. A friend of mine told me the following little anecdote:

A chop was sent to Mr. Gloster, while my friend took his own luncheon in his dining-room. When the servant placed the food before the model he asked her very politely if she had a pair of spectacles.

"No," said the girl; "what should I do with spectacles?"

"Ah, to be sure! Well, now, what age may the cook be?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Well, would you mind asking her if she could oblige me with a pair? I wouldn't keep them a minute."

The message was conveyed to the cook, who indignantly said:

"Drat the man! What does he think I want with spectacles? I have got no such thing! Go and ask him what he wants spectacles for."

"The cook doesn't wear spectacles," said the girl, addressing the model, "and there ain't such a thing in the house; and she wishes to know what you want spectacles for."

"Well," said Gloster, looking intently into his plate (on which, my friend said, there was a small chop), "I want to see what this is; it's undiscoverable with the naked eye!"

My experience of the ladies who honor us by sitting is extensive. As a rule, they are all that could be desired—patient, kindly, long-suffering, and well-behaved. I confess to a strong liking for many of my models, male and female. I am grateful to them for valuable assistance, and never in my life have I had the least "difficulty" with the greater number of them; indeed, instances of misbehavior among the females are very rare indeed, and they usually consist of unpunctuality, which is a deadly sin. The kindness of lady friends rendered the employment of the professional model almost needless in the pictures of "The Road to Ruin." These works were exhibited in 1878, and, judging by the public attention they received, may be said to have been successful. The policeman and the rail were again required; and I received many compliments, and no doubt much abuse. The copyright was purchased by the Art Union of London, and the pictures were etched by one of the greatest professors of that art in France; but from some cause or other (the fault, probably, was in the pictures) the etchings were not successful.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FONTHILL STORY.

The late Mr. Phillips, the well-known Bond Street auctioneer, was an intimate friend of my uncle Scaife's, at whose house I frequently met him; and though I was a very young student fifty years ago, and quite incapable of properly appreciating fine works of art, I often, at Mr. Phillips' suggestion, visited his rooms whenever great collections were dispersed there. Hearing that a Holy Family by Raphael was to be sold, I went to see it, and though it was of doubtful authenticity, I thought it was a very fine picture. I was discussing its merits—with all the ignorant assurance of youth—with Mr. Phillips in his office, when an elderly gentleman walked briskly past the door on his way to the gallery. He was a short man, dressed in a green coat with brass buttons, leather breeches, and top-boots, and his hair was powdered. "That is Mr. Beckford," said Phillips. I had just read "Vathek," and was very curious to see the author of it; so I rushed upstairs to the auction-rooms, and found the great little man studying the so-called Raphael. I stood close to the picture and studied Mr. Beckford, who proceeded to criticise the work in language of which my respectable pen can give my readers but a faint idea. It must not be thought that the remarks were addressed to me or to anybody but the speaker himself. "That d—d thing a Raphael! Great heavens! think of that now! Can there be such d—d fools as to believe that a Raphael! What a d—d fool I was to come here!" and without a glance at other pictures the critic departed.

It was many years after this that a distant connection of mine, who, I must premise, was a person of an inquiring mind, found himself involved in a curious adventure. My relative had been in business, from which he retired at an unusually early time of life, having acquired a handsome competence. He was married, but childless, and having bought a house in the salubrious city of Bath, he retired there, and passed his time in reading and in finding out everything he could about all the people in the place. There was one house, and that the most interesting of all, that shut its door against my inquisitive friend and everybody else. Fonthill Abbey, or Fonthill Splendor, as it was sometimes called, situated a few miles from Bath, was a treasure-house of beauty. Every picture was said to be a gem, and the gardens were unequalled by any in England, the whole being guarded by a dragon in the form of Mr. Beckford. "Not only," says an authority, "had the art-treasures of that princely place been sealed against the public, but the park itself—known by rumor as a beautiful spot—had for several years been enclosed by a most formidable wall, about seven miles in circuit, twelve feet high, and crowned by a *chevaux-de-frise.*" These formidable obstacles my distant cousin undertook to surmount, and he laid a wager of a considerable sum that he would walk in the gardens, and even penetrate into the house itself.

Having nothing better to do, he spent many an anxious hour in watching the great gate in the wall, in the hope that by some inadvertence it might be left open and unguarded; and one day that happy moment arrived. The porter was ill, and his wife opened the gate to a tradesman, who, after depositing his goods at the lodge (no butcher or baker was permitted to go to the abbey itself), retired, leaving the gate open, relying probably upon the woman's shutting it. Quick as thought my relative passed the awful portals, and made his way across the park. Guided by the high tower—called "Beckford's Folly"—my inquisitive friend made his way to the gardens, and not being able immediately to find the entrance, was leaning on a low wall that shut the gardens from the park, and taking his fill of delight at the gorgeous display—the gardens being in full beauty—when a man with a spud in his hand — perhaps the head-gardener — approached, and asked the intruder how he came there, and what he wanted.

"The fact is, I found the gate in the wall open, and having heard a great deal about this beautiful place, I thought I should like to see it."

"Ah!" said the gardener, "you would, would you? Well, you can't see much where you are. Do you think you could manage to jump over the wall? If you can, I will show you the gardens."

My cousin looked over the wall, and found such a palpable obstacle—in the shape of a deep ditch—on the other side of it, that he wondered at the proposal.

"Oh, I forgot the ditch! Well, go to the door; you will find it about a couple of hundred yards to your right, and I will admit you."

In a very short time, to his great delight, my cousin found himself listening to the learned names of rare plants and inhaling the perfume of lovely flowers. Then the fruit-gardens and hot-houses—"acres of them," as he afterwards declared—were submitted to his inspection. After the beauties of the gardens and grounds had been thoroughly explored, and the wager half won, the inquisitive one's pleasure may be imagined when his guide said:

"Now, would you like to see the house and its contents? There are some rare things in it—fine pictures and so on. Do you know anything about pictures?"

"I think I do, and should, above all things, like to see those of which I have heard so much; but are you sure that you will not get yourself into a scrape with Mr. Beckford? I've heard he is so very particular."

"Oh, no!" said the gardener. "I don't think Mr. Beckford will mind what I do. You see, I have known him all my life, and he lets me do pretty well as I like here."

"Then I shall only be too much obliged."

"Follow me, then," said the guide.

My distant cousin was really a man of considerable taste and culture, a great lover of art, with some knowledge of the old masters and the different schools; and he often surprised his guide, who, catalogue in hand, named the different pictures and their authors, by his acute and often correct criticisms. So intimate was his acquaintance with the styles of some of the different painters, that he was frequently able to anticipate his guide's information. When the pictures had been thoroughly examined there remained *bric-à-brac* of all kinds—costly suits of armor, jewelry of all ages, bridal coffers beautifully painted by Italian artists, numbers of ancient and modern musical instruments, with other treasures, all to be carefully and delightedly examined, till, the day nearing fast towards evening, the visitor prepared to depart, and was commencing a speech of thanks in his best manner, when the gardener said, looking at his watch:

"Why, bless me, it's five o'clock! ain't you hungry? You must stop and have some dinner."

"No, really, I couldn't think of taking such a liberty. I am sure Mr. Beckford would be offended."

"No, he wouldn't. You must stop and dine with me; I am Mr. Beckford."

My far-off cousin's state of mind may be imagined. He had won his wager, and he was asked, actually asked, to dine with the man whose name was a terror to the tourist, whose walks abroad were so rare that his personal appearance was unknown to his neighbors. What a thing to relate to his circle at Bath! How Mr. Beckford had been belied, to be sure! The dinner was magnificent, served on massive plate—the wines of the rarest vintage. Rarer still was Mr. Beckford's conversation. He entertained his guest with stories of Italian travel, with anecdotes of the great in whose society he had mixed, till he found the shallowness of it; in short, with the outpouring of a mind of great power and thorough cultivation. My cousin was well-read enough to be able to appreciate the conversation and contribute to it, and thus the evening passed delightfully away. Candles were lighted, and host and guest talked till a fine Louis Quatorze clock struck eleven. Mr. Beckford rose and left the room. The guest drew his chair to the fire, and waited the return of his host. He thought he must have dozed, for he started to find the room in semi-darkness, and one of the solemn powdered footmen putting out the lights.

"Where is Mr. Beckford?" said my cousin.

"Mr. Beckford has gone to bed," said the man, as he extinguished the last candle.

The dining-room door was open, and there was a dim light in the hall.

"This is very strange," said my cousin; "I expected Mr. Beckford back again. I wished to thank him for his hospitality."

This was said as the guest followed the footman to the front-door. That functionary opened it wide, and said:

"Mr. Beckford ordered me to present his compliments to you, sir, and I am to say that, as you found your way into Fonthill Abbey without assistance, you may find your way out again as best you can; and he hopes you will take care to avoid the bloodhounds that are let loose in the gardens every night. I wish you good-evening. No, thank you, sir; Mr. Beckford never allows vails."

My cousin climbed into the branches of the first tree that promised a safe shelter from the dogs, and there waited for daylight; and it was not till the sun showed himself that he made his way, terror attending each step, through the gardens into the park, and so to Bath. "The wager was won," said my relative; "but not for fifty million times the amount would I again pass such a night as I did at Fonthill Abbey."

I am in a position to assure my reader that this story of Fonthill Abbey is absolutely true.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"THE RACE FOR WEALTH."

As I approach the present time I feel a difficulty in speaking of my own work. Indeed, the task at any time is not an agreeable one; but it is made easier in the case of pictures which have long taken a settled place, so to speak, in public estimation. Time was required to effect that; and time must pass, and a good deal of it, before modern work can be estimated at its true value. Notoriety is not fame; and when it is remembered that an obscure artist, called Glover, found ready sale for his landscapes, while Gainsborough's were neglected; that Romney fell out of fashion while in the plenitude of his power; that Constable only sold his works with difficulty, and at very small prices; and that Turner had a whole gallery full of pictures that he could not sell, it is wrong to rely on popularity as a proof of merit, or the neglect engendered by fashion and fed by ignorance (which is the fate of all painters sooner or later) as evidence of failing powers.

In this year a great international exhibition was held in Paris, when the English school of painters received worthy recognition. Most of the principal British painters were well represented, and the French artists, to their great surprise, it is said, found that there was really a school of art in England worthy the name. I went to Paris with two friends, one of whom was Millais, and we were received very graciously by many of the French painters; Millais, of course, carrying away, as he deserved, the lion's share of the applause. We were not surprised at the kindness of our reception, but the houses—palaces would be the better name—in which some of the artists lived surprised me very much. Millais and Leighton are pretty decently lodged, but Detaille and Meissonier outstrip them in splendor. I had never seen either of these gentlemen before, and when I was introduced to a demonstrative little man, as brisk as a boy of twenty—attired in black dress-trousers and a blue-silk blouse, open in front, disclosing a bright-red shirt, a long gray beard falling over the latter—as M. Meissonier, I had an example before me of the truth of the saying that big souls often locate themselves in small bodies. Detaille is a soldierly-looking man, reminding one of the figures he draws so well; but his house! and his bed! the latter a marvellous structure—we had a sight of it from his studio; black-and-gold splendor—I told him I should be afraid to sleep in it.

We met our old friend Gambart in Paris, with whom was De Keyser, the head of the Academy at Antwerp. He had come to Paris mainly to paint portraits of Millais and my humble self for introduction into a large composition to be executed by him on the walls of Gambart's house at Nice. We take our place in a group of contemporary painters.

Sarah Bernhardt, actress, sculptor, and painter, is a friend of Mr. Gambart's, and as we were desirous of an introduction to a person so celebrated, a day was fixed for our visit. We were admitted, through large gates, into a garden, with little tables dotted about. Carpeted steps led up to the chief entrance; we passed it, and found ourselves in a large hall, furnished with magnificence, in the shape of sculpture, armor, clocks, etc. Only a rapid glance was possible, as we were ushered immediately into the studio—many more sculptures, in various states of incompleteness, huge tropical plants, and unfinished pictures—and, as we entered, a boy dressed in white, with yellow hair, sprang from a sofa and greeted us warmly. The seeming boy was Miss Sarah Bernhardt, whose masculine attire was assumed for the convenience it afforded for the practice of the art she loves far more than that in which she is so famous. She made the astounding declaration to me that she hated acting, and would rather succeed in painting or sculpture, or both, than in any other earthly calling.

Of her painting I cannot speak, for I saw no completed work; but her sculpture surprised us all, and left little doubt that, if she devoted herself entirely to that art, she would take a high place among its professors. We saw her play in Voltaire's "Zaire," and also in Victor Hugo's "Hernani," and from these performances, and what I have seen since, I consider Sarah Bernhardt by far the greatest actress I ever saw. Old playgoers say she is surpassed by Rachel; that actress I never saw, but I cannot conceive it possible for acting to go beyond that of this wonderful woman.

Encouraged by the success of the "Road to Ruin," I immediately embarked in a new venture—a series of five pictures, representing the career of a fraudulent financier, or promoter of bubble companies, a character not uncommon in 1877, or, perhaps, even at the present time. I wished to illustrate, also, the common passion for speculation, and the destruction that so often attends the indulgence of it to the lives and fortunes of the financier's dupes. I planned my first scene in the office of the financier—eventually called the spider—the principal flies being an innocent-looking clergyman, who, with his wife and daughters, are examining samples of ore supposed to be the product of a mine—a map of which is conspicuous on the wall—containing untold wealth. The office is filled with other believers—a pretty widow with her little son, a rough country gentleman in overcoat and riding-boots, a foreigner who bows obsequiously to the great projector as he enters from an inner office—in which clerks are seen writing—while a picture-dealer attends with "a gem," which he hopes to sell to the great man, whose taste for art is not incompatible with his love of other people's money. Other flies buzz round the web.

The second picture represents the spider at home. He is here discovered in a handsome drawing-room, receiving guests who have been invited to an entertainment. He stands—in evening dress—extolling the merits of a large picture to a group of his guests, one of whom, a pretty girl, shows by her smothered laugh that she appreciates the vulgar ignorance of the connoisseur, whose art-terms are evidently ludicrously misapplied. The double drawing-room contains many figures, some of whom may be recognized as the clients in the first scene at the office; others are of "the upper ten," whose admiration of success, combined with the hope of sharing in it, so often betrays them into strange company.

If "misfortune makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows," the converse is no less true; for who has not been startled by the appearance of an uncouth and vulgar figure in what is called "high society," who, on inquiry, has proved to have had but one cause for his admission, namely, the possession of great wealth, and the reputation of having acquired it by successful speculation; the secret of which his hosts hope to ascertain and practise?

After this moral reflection, for which I must ask pardon, I proceed with my description. My host's wife, of a vulgar type, receives more guests announced by the butler, the open door allowing evidence of the approaching banquet to be seen. Hungry guests examine their watches, other guests arrive, and the company goes to a dinner which must be left to my reader's imagination.

In the third of the series the crash has come. The foolish clergyman sits at his breakfast-table, with his head bent to the blow. His wife, with terrified face, reads the confirmation of her worst fears in the newspaper, which a retreating footman has brought. Two daughters have risen, terror-stricken, from their chairs, and a little midshipman son looks at the scene with a puzzled expression, in which fear predominates. The catastrophe is complete: the little fortune has been invested in the mine, and the whole of it lost. But my hero has been overbold; he has produced ore which his impending trial proves to be the product of a mine, but not of the one in which his unhappy victims took shares. He is arrested, and takes his place in the dock at the Old Bailey, where we must now follow him, and also arrive at the fourth of the scenes in "The Race for Wealth." See the financier there standing, with blanched face, listening to the evidence given by the clergyman, which, if proved, will consign him to penal servitude. His victims—recognizable as those in his office in the opening of my story—stand ready to add their testimony. The widow, the foreigner, the country gentleman are there; and so, also, are some of his aristocratic guests, one of whom studies his miserable face by the aid of an opera-glass. The counsel and the jury examine the real and the spurious specimens of ore. The evidence is overwhelming, the verdict is pronounced; and that it is "Guilty" is proved by the final scene, where, in prison-garb, the luckless adventurer takes his dismal exercise, with his fellow-convicts, in the great quadrangle of Millbank jail. And so ends my tale; and my object is accomplished—rightly or wrongly conceived—that both those who, in their eagerness to become rich, rush into rash speculation, and the man who cheats them, should all be punished. In the comic paper called *Fun* the admirable artist of that journal, Mr. Sullivan, laid hold of my puppets, and made them play a different game. He represented the clergyman as ruined, it is true; but he declined to punish the swindler, who rolls along a street in his carriage, accompanied by his vulgar wife, without the least display of sympathy for the poor parson, who is reduced to sweeping a crossing over which the carriage has just passed. I will not dispute the probability of the truth of my friend Sullivan's version, for I know instances of it; but, naturally, I prefer my own. With a view to truthfulness, I visited several offices in the City—stockbrokers and others—in order that my swindler's surroundings in his place of business should be *en règle;* but I found so strong an objection on the part of my stockbroking friends to any of their offices being used for my purpose that I was obliged to evolve one out of my inner consciousness. Having no such scruples, I did not hesitate to use my own drawing-room as a reception-room for my hero's company; and, the Old Bailey being common property, I found no difficulty in taking measurements and photographs of that dreadful place. I examined every part of it. I made my way from Newgate through subterranean passages to the dock, in which I took my place as an imaginary criminal. I tried to realize the impression that the sight of the judge, with the sword of justice over him, together with a crowded court, would produce on the half-dazed eyes of the poor wretch who had come upon the scene through those dim passages. I hear of an intention to pull down the old court, which is, no doubt, in many respects inconvenient. If that should happen my trial-scene will acquire an additional interest; for, well or ill done, it is an exact representation of the Old Bailey.

I derived great assistance from the eminent personages whose duties so often take them there, who all expressed their willingness to sit for my picture. First, the judge, my old friend Baron Huddleston, in the kindest manner donned his robes, and sat so well for me that a good likeness is the result. Valuable assistance was afforded by Alderman Sir Thomas Gabriel, who takes his place on the bench near the judge. I may say the same of the officers of the court, and of the clerk of arraigns, Mr. Avory, whose portrait is considered very like him. The barristers in the picture represent Sergeant Ballantine, Mr. Poland, and Montagu Williams, all of whom gave up many hours of valuable time in my favor. I did not omit the well-known face of Mr. George Lewis, nor can I forget to thank him in this place for his good offices. With respect to the prison at Millbank, admission was difficult, unless I qualified myself by a proceeding which, however easy it might make my entrance, would effectually preclude my voluntary exit. Armed, then, with a letter of introduction from a high personage, I sought the Governor of Millbank, and in Captain Talbot Harvey I found a man in authority who most readily promised me every kind of assistance, only requiring compliance with certain easy conditions. I should see many prisoners, but I must not speak to any of them. I minutely explained my object.

"Yes, you shall see the prisoners taking their constitutional in one of the courtyards."

"How far are they apart as they walk?"

"Well, far enough to prevent the probability of communication—though, in spite of every care to prevent it, they manage to speak, but very rarely; for the first nine months of their punishment they are condemned to dead silence. You will want a prison-dress to paint from? Ah, that will be difficult. We shall see. Now I will take you where you like." Then, looking at the clock, the governor added, "This is just the time the prisoners take their walk."

My guide conducted me, accompanied by a tall warder, through passages and doors which were unlocked to admit us to other passages, and always carefully locked behind us, till we arrived at a large irregular quadrangle, where fifty or sixty men in fustian suits, marked with the broad arrow, were walking rapidly one after another, always preserving the prescribed distance, in a dreadful circle; not a sound but the monotonous tramp. Two warders only, placed at opposite sides of the circle, were enough to control this ghastly assembly. The first thought of a stranger would be that the warders were in danger, and I expressed myself to that effect to the governor.

"Oh, no, there is no fear. A preconcerted attack is impossible; and, should an attempt be made by any of the more violent, the rest would help the officers."

Noticing the pale faces, made additionally grim by partly-grown beards, I remarked:

"I thought the prisoners were always shaved!"

"Yes," said Captain Harvey, "we used to shave them all; but it was found so difficult to keep the razors in order, and the poor fellows complained so much of the pain of being shaved by bad razors, that we cut their beards short instead."

As the prisoners passed and repassed us, I noticed faces that retained an air of breeding and refinement (some so young!) that the prison-dress and the stubby beard could not efface; and I displayed a perhaps pardonable curiosity to know the name and crime of one whose walk, even, betrayed the gentleman.

"No," said my courteous guide; "it would be quite irregular to disclose the name or the crime of any prisoner, and for one good reason, among many others: you might possibly meet the very man you inquire about in society, and that before very long; and it would be manifestly wrong in us to deprive him of the advantage his evening dress and full-grown beard would give him in evading discovery of his unfortunate antecedents. I may perhaps surprise you when I tell you that several of those you see exercising are going through their second and third terms of five years' penal servitude. Strange, isn't it? I should have thought one term would be enough, but no; and the way they will deny their previous convictions is curious. One man (whose face I knew again in a moment), when I said to him, 'So here you are again!' declared, with a wonderful assumption of innocent truthfulness, 'Me, sir; no, sir. I never was in prison in my life before.' I was staggered for a moment, but a second look convinced me. I sent for a collection of photographs, selected the gentleman's likeness (taken, as all prisoners are, after conviction), and, showing it to him, said, 'That's you, isn't it?'

"'Well, sir,' said the man, turning the photograph about and looking at it with the air of a connoisseur, 'I shouldn't have knowed it myself;' then, with an air of frankness, 'but if a gent like you says it's me, it don't become such a cove as me to contradict you, you know, sir.'"

In my sketch of the prisoners exercising, I had committed the important mistake of making them walk within speaking-distance of each other; the dress I had imagined was as unlike as possible to the real one; and of the architecture of a prison-yard I was fortunately ignorant. These mistakes were now to be easily rectified, provided I could be permitted to take photographs of the quadrangle, and be furnished with one of the convict's dresses. There was much hesitation on the part of the authorities before the dress was lent to me; and it was only on my undertaking that I would avoid the slightest resemblance to any of the prisoners whose exercise I had watched, that my request was granted. I need scarcely say that I carefully selected types that may some day take their constitutional at Millbank, but are at present more or less respectable members of society. I went several times to the prison, and was consigned to a warder who, less reticent than the governor, but equally careful not to infringe rules, told me some amusing stories of the prisoners, one of which shall be recorded.

The burglar Peace—whose crimes and fate are well known—was what the warder styled "a first-class prisoner." He had served a long period of imprisonment before he committed the murders which consigned him to the scaffold; and during the latter portion of it he was allowed, partly as an indulgence for his good behavior, to practise an art in which he displayed much ingenuity; namely, that of cutting out of a rough kind of cardboard a variety of objects—birds, beasts, fishes, houses, and the like. The royal arms was a favorite subject. I was shown one of these, and really the lion and the unicorn showed the true feeling of an artist. He colored his productions when paints were available.

"A little too glaring," the warder said, "but very pretty. He was a good talker too, sir, was Peace; he wouldn't mind telling lots of burgling stories. He was a first-class burglar, we considered him. Well, one day he said to me:

"'What a sad thing it is that when once a person gets a character for being untruthful nobody will believe what he says! Now, to give you an idea, Mr. Green,' says he (Green's my name, sir), 'there was a friend of mine, a chemist, at Clapham. He had a prejudice against me because I had told him lies now and then; and one day I was in his shop smoking a cigar. I'd gone for some physic, not feeling quite the thing; and he says to me, says he, sniffing up:

"'"That's a fine cigar you are smoking, Peace," he says. "Where might you have got those cigars?"

"'"I stole 'em," I said.

"'"Did you?" says he, laughing. "I wish you would steal some for me."

"'"Well, I will," said I; and a few days after I goes into his shop with half a boxful of same cigars. "There you are," says I; "I have stolen some for you, as I promised." Well, he laughs again more than ever; but he didn't believe me, though I assure you I had told him the truth.'"

An innocent man was very nearly being hanged for one of Mr. Peace's murders. On being discharged from the care of my friend Mr. Green, Peace at once resumed his burglarious profession. He always went armed, as a precaution, and, to use his own words, "not with any idea of hurting nobody;" and it was only when he found himself so hard pressed, after committing a burglary, as to leave him the choice of being taken by a policeman or of shooting him, that, much to his regret, he was compelled to use his revolver, and the policeman fell dead. An innocent man was tried for this murder, found guilty of it, and condemned to death; but as some doubt arose with respect to an *alibi*, upon which the poor fellow had relied, his sentence was commuted into imprisonment for life. Peace's success encouraged him to further efforts, many of them being rewarded with the result that his genius deserved, till one luckless night, after a very hazardous operation, he was again interrupted; "most unfairly," he said, "for he only wanted to go away quietly."

The owner of the house—or, to quote Peace again, of "the crib that he had cracked"—surprised Mr. Peace as he was leaving the premises laden with the "swag," seized the burglar, and paid for his courage with his life. Peace was arrested, and made a full confession of this and other murders, entirely exculpating the poor man who was lingering in prison, where he had already passed more than two years. The innocent man was, of course, instantly released, receiving what the law calls "a free pardon" for a crime that he had not committed. In Peace's confession he acknowledged the justice of his doom in these words :

"Well, I am a-going to be executed, and I suppose I've no call to complain ; but what I say is this, I'm going to be hung for *what I done, but never intended.*" I may close my account of Mr. Peace's career with a horribly grim joke said to have been perpetrated by one of the witnesses of his execution. The rope was round the criminal's neck, and the executioner was on the point of drawing the bolt, when the criminal exclaimed :

"Wait a bit; give me some water—just a drop."

As the words left his lips they were closed forever.

"He asked for a *drop*," said the hardened bystander, "and he has got it."

It is a little remarkable that the penitentiary at Millbank is—like the Old Bailey—doomed to destruction, and will soon cease to be a prison. I think, therefore, that the courtyard—with its surrounding cells—which forms the *mise-en-scène* of my picture, precisely copied from nature as it is, may be interesting as a record of prison life at this time.

The series of "The Race for Wealth" was exhibited in King Street, St. James's, and visited by great numbers of people. The pictures were translated by photogravure, but whether from the faults of the pictures, or of the method in which they were reproduced, the result was far from satisfactory.

My summer holiday of 1879 was spent at Tenby. Though it has been my habit to insist upon enforced idleness, as regards the actual practice of my profession, for at least a month or six weeks of every year, I have neither been able, nor willing, to banish from my mind all thought of fresh material for my work ; and the sight of the Welsh fishwomen with their picturesque costumes suggested subjects for a variety of pictures. It was common to see these women, with their high Welsh hats and bright petticoats, offering their wares to the visitors ; bargains being struck as the ladies stood at their windows. One such scene I determined to paint, and that picture—together with a single figure-piece—were my only contributions to the Exhibition of 1880; my principal work being shown elsewhere. After an interval of eight years I found myself again a member of the dreadful and dreaded hanging committee. I can say for myself, and I feel sure I can say for my colleagues, that we tried to do our "spiriting gently;" but I fear we did not escape censure for not performing impossibilities; and so long as would-be exhibitors are allowed to send in any number of pictures in the hope of one or two being selected, confusion and unintentional injustice must occur.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MYSTERIOUS SITTER.

The first fog of the season made its hated appearance early in October of the year 1853, and I had cast my despairing eyes many times up to the square patch of opaque pea-soup atmosphere that showed itself at the window of my studio, in the hope that I might discover a favorable change in its determined opposition to the practice of the fine arts, when my servant entered the room and presented me with a card.

"The gentleman is in the drawing-room, and would like to see you on particular business."

"Mr. William Rivers," said the card.

I found my visitor to be a tall, gentlemanly-looking man about thirty, who, after profuse apology for taking the liberty of calling on me, said in a strangely nervous and agitated manner that he had seen some of my works in the possession of a friend, and though they were not portraits, he hoped—that is, he feared—that though it might not be my habit to —, still, perhaps, I might under certain circumstances (what on earth is the man driving at? thought I) I might — I might be induced — here the nervousness became so embarrassing that I suggested an adjournment to my painting-room, more in the hope of giving the gentleman time to collect himself than with the desire of showing him the work I had in progress. The fog had cleared sufficiently to enable my visitor to see a small picture, then on the easel, and nearly completed. I immediately found I had to do with a man who had not only a love of art, but a knowledge of its principles. But he could not talk about the little scene from "The Bride of Lammermoor" forever; the object of his visit must be broached, and then the nervous condition took possession

16*

of him more completely than before. After an awkward silence, he said:

"It is not for myself. I have no interest—that is, I am interested for my friend Street. He lives in Nottingham—you know Nottingham? No? Ah—yes—well, she is his sister—young lady—yes, he would like you to paint her portrait." (Is this all? what is there to be nervous about? I said to myself.)

"I never paint portraits," was my reply; and I explained my reason on seeing the blank look of disappointment that the handsome face assumed. I showed him a female figure painted from a model, for which I had received a sum as large, or perhaps larger, than I could charge for a portrait of a similar size; and I told him that in painting it I had no thought about *likeness*, which in a portrait is essential. I had no one but myself to please. Artists' models are selected on account of some charm of feature or expression — they are all, more or less, agreeable objects of contemplation; whereas the man who undertakes a portrait may be condemned to spend hour after hour in studying the ugly or the commonplace, and please nobody after all.

The stranger's face brightened as he said:

"But suppose now, for the sake of argument (*sic*)—suppose that you have a beautiful girl proposed to you, quite, I should say — yes, more so than that you have just done, and she would sit quite still, you know, and so on—suit herself to your time, and that sort of thing — in short, make herself very agreeable in every way, would you undertake to oblige my friend—and—and—me?"

After a moment's pause, I said:

"Well, if the lady is what you describe, and she will fulfil the conditions you name, I will do my best to please all concerned."

"Will you? will you?" he exclaimed, in a paroxysm of agitation. "Well then, I hope, Mr. Frith, that I shall not—a—a—that my visit, I mean—that I shall be able to go to my—to Mr. Street at Nottingham, I mean—and say you consent to paint his sister. That you will agree with everybody in thinking her a lovely girl, I have no doubt at all. When can she take her first sitting?"

"Ah! by the way," said I, "I can't go to Nottingham, you know. How is that to be managed?"

"I may say," was the reply, "that my friend Street has left me *carte blanche* as to terms, so there will be no difficulty about that; and Miss Street, she—she—oh, of course, not. Nottingham? Oh, no! She is in London, and will remain some months longer—at least, that is, I believe so; and I hope—a—you will find her a—"

"Where is she staying?"

"Staying — stay — " here the nervousness increased frightfully. "Her address? She lives — that is, she resides—at present she is staying—but perhaps you will be good enough not to mention my name to the lady she is with, if you please, because she does not know me, and I don't want her to hear my name in the matter of the picture—Miss Street is staying with a Mrs. Baker at present, who lives—yes—I will send you the address; and you bear in mind that my name is not to be mentioned."

"Of course you may depend on me in that respect."

"Oh, thank you! Let me see—I hope to be in Nottingham to night. Yes, this is Thursday; Friday too late. You shall hear from me on Saturday, Mr. Frith, without fail. You will be ready for first sitting Monday, you say. Mrs. Baker's address is 501 St. John's Wood Road. Saturday without fail. Good-day. Don't trouble yourself to come to the door. Ah! it has cleared up, I see. What convenient things these hansoms are! Pray don't stand in the air without your hat. Good-day!" And Mr. Rivers, still strangely agitated, jumped into his cab, and was whirled off townwards.

After he had gone, and I thought the matter over, I did not feel comfortable about it. Why did he shrink from telling me the address, and then tell it? And why was he so nervous? Perhaps the young lady was not so pretty after all — only beautiful in *his* eyes, for he was evidently —ah! the more I thought of it the less I liked Mr. William Rivers, with his hesitating manner so like guilt, his St. John's Wood Road, and his Mrs. Baker!

However, on the Saturday morning I received a note from Mr. Rivers, telling me that I might expect Miss

Street and Mrs. Baker at ten o'clock on Monday; and punctually to the moment they arrived. I found Mrs. Baker to be a lady of a certain age; still handsome, portly, and of excellent manners; a little over-precise perhaps, and utterly opposed to my preconceived idea of her. I may mention here what I afterwards discovered, namely, that Mrs. Baker had formerly kept a large establishment for young ladies, and now received only two or three for the purpose of "finishing" their education, Miss Street being one of these.

I need not tell those who have done me the honor to read thus far in my reminiscences, that, unsatisfactory as the productions of my pencil may be, I am still more unfortunate when I assume the pen; and as I most certainly failed to do justice to my lovely model with my brush, I cannot hope to convey a clear idea of her with the less familiar pen. She was tall, and graceful in every movement. Her head was small, perfectly formed, with a profusion of dark hair; her throat, like that which Anne Boleyn must have clasped with her pretty little hands when she made that cheerful remark to the headsman, white and round as — what you will, except snow or alabaster; very tender gray eyes, with long dark lashes; a straight nose, with proudly curved nostrils; and the loveliest of lovely mouths. Every turn of her head and every change of attitude disclosed a fresh beauty; and it was anxious work to select a position which, when once chosen, had to be fixed on canvas forever. But at last, after many turnings and twistings, and a strangled yawn or two from Mrs. Baker, an outline was made, and I set my model free; arranging for the "first painting" on the following day.

An account of the sittings would be wearisome. I knew from her sweet face she would sit well, and that she did most patiently; and when she saw me more than ordinarily dispirited and anxious, with downright failure staring me in the face and chilling me to the marrow, she would conquer all sense of fatigue, and again I saw the expression I would have given the world to catch. Mrs. Baker never came after the first visit. Miss Bloxam, a dowdy, good little soul, who seemed to have all the pillow-cases in St. John's Wood to make or mend, accompanied my sitter, and was harmless and good-natured enough.

I remembered my promise to Mr. Rivers, and never mentioned his name; but Miss Street often spoke of her brother, and impressed me with the idea that she had a deep affection for him. Sometimes I spoke of Nottingham as her home, and asked her when she expected to leave London and reside entirely with her brother; but to this inquiry, and others as to her friends in Nottinghamshire, I received short and hesitating replies. She had no present intention of leaving town, she said, and she seemed to know none of the Nottinghamshire families with whom I happened to be acquainted.

When the head of the portrait was near completion I was doubtful as to the likeness; and though Miss Bloxam gave a favorable opinion, I thought it would be desirable to communicate directly with the lady's brother, instead of through a friend, whose acts he might subsequently disavow. I accordingly wrote such a letter to Mr. Rivers as I thought would insure me an answer from the principal in the affair; but the reply was from Mr. Rivers, who merely desired me to do my best, being empowered to assure me that, like or unlike, the picture was to be considered Mr. Street's. So I advanced the head still further, and Mr. Street having sent a splendid yellow-satin dress from Nottingham — a dress which harmonized admirably with Miss Street's complexion — I clothed my lay figure in the gorgeous robes, and by dint of painting, now in the dark, now in the light, I finished the costume. I think it was on the day when I had put the last touches to the black lace on the dress that a lady and gentleman called — the lady an extremely elegant person, and the gentleman, whom she introduced as her brother, a tall, handsome, soldierly-looking man with a black mustache—and, after many apologies for their intrusion, asked to be allowed to see Miss Street's portrait. With all the politeness I could summon for the occasion, I declined to show the portrait until after Miss Street had given me another, and, as I hoped, a final sitting; this would take place in a few days, and if they would favor me with a call in about a fortnight, they should have their wish. Both the lady and her brother seemed to know Miss Street and Mrs. Baker very well, and the gentleman asked me if Mrs. Baker was present during the sittings. I thought he seemed pleased when I answered in the negative; but he said nothing, and they took their leave. For a fortnight after this I saw nothing of my beautiful sitter, the weather being so miserable with fog and darkness that painting at all, much less finishing, was out of the question; but on the first struggle of the sun to show himself I betook myself to St. John's Wood Road to arrange for a sitting the next day. I found Mrs. Baker's house, and was shown into a very handsome drawing-room, where sat Mrs. Baker herself. She received me very graciously, and I told her my errand. Then she lifted her eyebrows gently, and said:

"Miss Street's portrait! Ah, I perceive, then, you have not had a visit from Mr. Street."

I told her I had never seen Mr. Street in my life.

"Dear me!" she said, very placidly; "Miss Street is out of town."

"Out of town!" I exclaimed. "Why, Miss Street informed me that it was not only not probable, but that her arrangements made it impossible for her to leave London before Christmas, and—"

"No doubt; and I can quite clear Miss Street of attempting to deceive, *in this case* at any rate," said Mrs. Baker, with emphasis. "She had no idea she was about to leave London; of that I am quite sure."

"Well," said I, feeling rather bewildered, "may I ask when she is expected to return?"

"When Miss Street is expected to return here, do you mean? She is not expected to return to this house, nor would she be permitted to do so."

After this blow I was stunned, and silent for a moment. I then looked at Mrs. Baker's face, and fancied, from what I saw there, that she was brimful of something she wished to divulge, but did not know how to begin. At last she said,

"You need be under no apprehension about not being paid for the portrait; they seemed to be very anxious about it, and there is plenty of money. And Mr. Street didn't call? How odd! You have never seen Mr. Street, did you say?"

"Never," I replied, from the depths of gloom.

"May I ask— Ah, now I remember. You are not a portrait-painter?"

"No."

"No! You undertook to paint Miss Street's portrait through the intervention of a mutual friend? Was it not so?"

My promise to Mr. Rivers flashed across me, so I said,

"Why, scarcely a mutual friend. I never saw the gentleman but once, and—"

"Not a mutual friend!" interrupted Mrs. Baker. "Deception again! Decidedly they said a mutual friend. That you didn't paint portraits, but as a special favor you— I am confident he was a mutual friend. What was his name?"

"His name? Well, I—"

"Was it Rivers or Collins?"

"It was not Collins, I think; but—"

"Was it William Rivers?"

The woman thoroughly drove me into a corner. I could only say, feebly, that I could not take upon myself to say; that I could not tax my memory.

"I only saw the gentleman once, you know," I added, artfully.

"Your memory, I fear, is not very good," said Mrs. Baker, with a slight sneer. "But you have *heard* from Mr. Street?"

"No, I have not, Mrs. Baker," I said; and added, with indignation, "and, considering I am painting his sister's portrait, I think—"

"Nor from his friend, whose name has escaped you? Haven't you heard from the friend?"

"Yes; I have heard twice from the friend, as you call him."

"And yet," exclaimed Mrs. Baker, with frightful emphasis, "and yet you cannot recollect his name?"

There was no use in playing with such a woman, so I said at once,

"I must be candid with you; I *cannot* tell you the name of the person who called on me. I—you understand."

"PERfectly," said Mrs. Baker, "PERfectly; nothing but deceit. I beg your pardon— ?"

"I was not about to make any remark," I said, as she stopped abruptly. "I merely want to know when Miss Street will return."

This set Mrs. Baker off again. She implored me to dismiss any fear "of a pecuniary nature" from my mind. No expense had been spared with regard to the "young person;" there was evidently plenty of money. She had had singing-lessons, German lessons, *riding-lessons;* and as she uttered the last words Mrs. Baker went off at a tangent, and said,

"Now, Mr. Frith, you have never seen Mr. Street, and you cannot remember the name of the person who ordered you to paint the portrait; pray may I ask if you know any other friend of Miss Street's?"

I said, "No; certainly not."

Then I bethought me of the lady and gentleman who had called to see the portrait. I mentioned that visit and described the visitors. Instantly Mrs. Baker's face flushed.

"And their names," she asked, eagerly, "their names? Were they Mrs. Allen and Captain Hill?"

"Well, I am not quite certain," said I, "but I think those were the names. Do you know these people? They seemed to take great interest in Miss Street."

"Who seemed to take great interest in her—I mean in Miss Street—Captain Hill? Yes, indeed! The *interest* Captain Hill takes in Miss Street is the cause of her not being able to sit for you to-morrow; they had taken riding-lessons together, you know. Captain Hill has driven Miss Street out of town; not that she wanted to go. He is a very handsome man, you say; he may be. All I can say is, he has created a fine confusion, he and his companion plotter, the riding-master. To be candid with you, it is a stupid love-matter. Your handsome captain has fallen deeply in love with Miss Street, and she with him."

I remarked there was nothing wonderful in that.

"Perhaps not, in the event of two such persons being thrown together; but they never ought to have met. However, I have washed my hands of the whole affair. My conduct is open to the world. I have no secrets, and I lend myself, knowingly at least, to no deception."

"May I ask how this — this — attachment became known?"

"You may," said Mrs. Baker, with enormous candor, "so might any one. As I said before, I have no secrets. Of course, Mr. Frith, being an artist, you are also a physiognomist. Now, to me, Miss Street has a face which derives one of its chief charms from its extremely *innocent* expression. Those eyes, how often have I thought that deceit could find no home there! She was quick-tempered; she had other faults; but deceit, never. Yet, oh, dear sir, how deceitful she has proved herself! To be brief: I saw a note lying on my hall-table, addressed to Miss Street; the address was written in a hand which I did not recognize as belonging to any of her usual correspondents; it seemed to me to be a gentleman's writing disguised, and made to look like a lady's. I was suspicious, I own, and when Miss Street was sitting on that very stool, reading the note, I watched her. She had just come in from her walk, and I thought, as she sat on that low stool, I had never seen a more innocent-looking, pretty creature. Do you know, I was almost ashamed of my suspicions, when I saw a faint blush on her face; it might have been fancy. She rose and left the room. After an absence of a minute or two she came back, and with that artless manner—you know her way—she said,

"'Mrs. Baker, would you like to know the contents of the note I was reading?'

"My reply was, 'Clara, my love, I have perfect confidence in you; you would receive a note from no one of whom I should disapprove. At the same time, if you wish to tell me what the note contained I can have no objection.'

"'Oh, I should like to tell you, for you might assist us,' said she; 'it is from an old schoolfellow of mine, poor Annie Featherstone. We were such friends, Mrs. Baker, and now her father has been speculating and lost everything in Pennsylvanian bonds; the family is quite reduced in circumstances, and poor dear Annie is obliged to go out as a governess—and she such a proud girl! it will be a sad blow. She has written to know if I can get her a situation.' That, Mr. Frith, was Miss Street's story, and I believed it. I was too credulous, for the story was false from the beginning to the end. The note came from Captain Hill."

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed. "How did you discover that?"

"It is, perhaps, not necessary," Mrs. Baker replied, in a dignified tone of reserve, "to enter into the means I took to discover the correspondence. I DID discover it, and I collected the letters and sent them to her brother."

"Well, but," said I, "perhaps the captain may be a good match for Miss Street; and if so, though the introduction may be what we could not approve exactly, why should Mr. Street object?"

On this point Mrs. Baker was very clear.

"Mr. Street does object," she said; "that is very plain. And if you had witnessed the scene that took place in this room you would have been as much puzzled to understand Mr. Street as I was. Never did I see a man so agitated; in fact, he could scarcely control himself. He arrived very early in the morning: we had not left our rooms. Miss Street declared she would not leave London. She seemed to have a strange repugnance to accompany her brother—she would follow him to-morrow—in a day or two—he could trust her, she supposed?—and so on. At last I felt obliged to say, 'Clara, my love, you forget this is my house; and I regret to have to tell you that, after the terrible way in which you have deceived me, there is no longer a home for you here. We must part, if you please.' I really felt for her, poor girl, she cried so; but then you know the dreadful story she told me, Mr. Frith!"

I was struck with an idea. "Pray, Mrs. Baker, what is Mr. Street like?"

Mrs. Baker immediately described a gentleman who would pass admirably for Mr. William Rivers.

"Come," thought I, "this is really mysterious;" and I asked Mrs. Baker to show me some of Mr. Street's handwriting. "The cover of one of his notes would do."

"By all means," said the lady, opening a small drawer in the table near her. "Here is the last letter I received from him. Oh, open it, open it; I wish for no concealment. I have no secrets."

The penmanship was strange to me; certainly not that of Rivers.

"That is Mr. Street's writing, is it?" I asked.

"I suppose so," was the reply; "but it is singularly unlike his usual penmanship. It is evidently written in great agitation, you see."

"May I see the ordinary writing?" I asked.

"Certainly. I will fetch you one of his letters;" and Mrs. Baker left the room.

During her absence I read the note again carefully, and on her return I said,

"Why, Mrs. Baker, I see no address. I was about to ask you for Mr. Street's address, as I wish, under the circumstances, to write to him."

"Post-office, Nottingham," said Mrs. Baker.

"Post-office, Nottingham!" I exclaimed. "Why, that is no address at all. Mr. Street surely doesn't keep a post-office!"

"That is the only address I have ever known," commenced the lady; but I, astonished out of my good manners, interrupted:

"And do you take a young lady into your house who gives no address beyond a post-office?"

Mrs. Baker was not offended in the least.

"Sir, your remark is natural and proper. I made every inquiry about Miss Street. There is a well-known family in Nottingham of that name; and I was assured, in reply to my searching questions, that I should be perfectly safe in receiving any member of the Street family. The name of Street had been well selected, or the young lady's name may really be Street, only she does not belong to the well-known family of that name. Here is one of Mr. Street's letters in his usual hand."

William Rivers, by all that is curious! "Oh! this is the other. Well, it is very unlike the last," said I.

"I attribute the difference to the agitation of the writer," said Mrs. Baker. "You see the writing in the first letter is tremulous and ill-formed."

"Well," said I, looking at the penmanship, and thoroughly convincing myself it was the work of Rivers, "I am really ashamed to have occupied your time so long."

"Pray don't name that. It is my desire, as I have had the pleasure of telling you very often, to have no useless concealment. I feel that there is a degree of mystery surrounding Miss Street that ought not to surround any young woman. For my part, I hate mysteries. I always find something that requires to be hidden at the bottom of a mystery. But I feel sure you will soon know Miss Street's true address, for they are very anxious about the portrait; and as to money, there is no lack of that."

Thereupon I took my leave, and went ruminating westward.

It was a strange affair this: a lovely girl, with her strange lover, strange brother, mysterious friend, and address at a post-office!

I was not kept long in suspense, for two days after my interview with Mrs. Baker I received a letter from Miss Street, announcing her regret at having had to leave London unexpectedly, and her intention of coming up to town one day in the following week. The letter came from Elm Tree House, Alfrington, near Nottingham. So I had an address at last, and I was chuckling over it, when Captain Hill and his sister were announced. They came professedly to see the portrait; but they had not been in my studio five minutes before I discovered that their chief object was to extract from me any information I might possess about my mysterious sitter.

I taxed my visitors with this, and they confessed it so frankly that I told them all I knew—which was little enough—and ended by giving them the address I had just received.

The captain seized the letter, eagerly scanned the address—which he copied—and declared his intention of starting at once for Alfrington, his object being, as he coolly informed me, to see the young lady's brother, declare his passion, and take his chance.

I agreed with his views, wished him success, and we parted capital friends, after his promise to let me know the result of his mission on his return.

Two or three days after this I received a second note from Miss Street, deferring her visit for another week; and it was not long after that time when, on returning from my afternoon walk, I was told that a gentleman was waiting for me in my drawing-room. There, bending over the fire, his chin resting on his hand, looking pale and worn, I found Captain Hill.

He apologized for intruding upon me, pleading as his excuse my being the only person he knew who took any interest in Miss Street.

I reassured him, and asked what success had attended his search.

"None," he said; "the mystery is as great as ever."

"But surely," said I, "you have seen her or her brother? You went, did you not, to their house?"

"It is a long story," he said, smiling feebly; "but such a strange one that you *must* hear it. I left London by the mail train in the evening of the day I last saw you here—the day you replied to Miss Street's note; indeed, I accompanied your letter, for I went by the train that conveyed it—and next morning I found myself in Alfrington. Alfrington is the beau-ideal of an old English village: little gable-ended cottages, the church overgrown with ivy, and all that sort of thing—quite rural, you know. I put up at an old inn, with a landlord to match, a Boniface of the old school, and quite as slow. He waited upon me when I was getting my breakfast, and by way of saying something, I asked him if the Street family, or any of them, ever paid him a visit. I thought perhaps the inn might be their property.

"'What name, sir? The name of Street? No, sir, I never heard the name myself—never know'd anybody of that name come here, sir.'

"'Well, but you know of the Street family who live near this place, don't you?'

"'Street family? Never heard of a family by that name about these parts. No, sir.'

"I finished my breakfast without any further attempt upon my landlord.

"It struck me that the best place for inquiry would be the post-office, and to that place I was going, when I overtook a man who looked so like a postman that I asked him if he was not that functionary.

"'Yes, I am, sir; the only one here, and have been for a good bit.'

"Very oddly the people talk there; really difficult to understand at times.

"'Well, then,' said I, 'will you be so good as to tell me whereabouts Elm Tree House is? You know it, no doubt.'

"'Helm Tree Hoose, sir?' (he called 'house' *hoose*). 'Can't say I do; and I know all the houses about these parts pretty well, too.'

"'Elm Tree House, near Alfrington,' said I, speaking each word very slowly. 'This is Alfrington, is it not?'

"'Oh, yes, sir,' he said, laughing, 'this is Alfrington, sure enough; but there is no house by that name as you speak of near Alfrington, I know.'

"'The devil there isn't! Why, a friend of mine receives letters from Elm Tree House, and replies to them; in fact, is in correspondence with a person at Elm Tree House; and this very mail has brought one from London to that address, to my certain knowledge. What do you say to that?'

"'Well, sir—excuse the joke, but I wish they may get it, sir. Excuse me laughing, sir; no offence. I shall have to deliver it at a place that I never heerd on, though I have been postman here nigh twenty years.'

"'Ah, well; thank you. Do you know the family of— Oh, never mind. Will you kindly direct me to the post-office?'

"'To be sure, sir. There you are, sir, that little shop with the old-fashioned window—that bow-window like—just where that old woman's a-passing. Good-day, sir.'

"Now, do you know, Mr. Frith, I really did begin to think it very strange that neither from my landlord nor from the postman—who, of all men, ought to have known the house from which Miss Street had undoubtedly written to you—could I get the least information; and, in grave doubts as to what I should do next if the postmaster failed me, I made my way to the little shop which also did duty as post-office. A man behind the counter was sorting letters as I entered; indeed, I thought I saw yours among them, and I was not mistaken.

"'I beg your pardon,' said I; 'I thought you would be sure to be able to direct me to a place I am anxious to find. Will you be so kind as to tell me where Elm Tree House is, somewhere close to this village?'

"'Elm Tree House,' said the man, very slowly; 'I don't know any house of that name near here. There is no such place near here, sir.'

"'No house of that name?' exclaimed I, now really perplexed.

"'No, sir; and here is a letter addressed to Elm Tree House' (showing the one you had written) 'from London, you see, sir. It's a rum thing, this is. I can't make it out, no more can't my missis.'

"'What do you mean you can't make out?' said I.

"'Why, you see, sir, there aren't such a place as Elm Tree House. It's a fictitious address, that is; but I had a letter myself about this here one, so I knowed it was a-coming.'

"'Oh, you knew it was coming; you knew it would come by this post to-day?'

"'Yes; oh, yes, we knowed it was coming. But it's a rum thing; we aren't used to them kind of tricks here.'

"'What sort of tricks? What on earth do you mean?'

"'Why, sir, I call it very queer when I get a letter, with no name signed to it, to tell me a letter will come from London, directed to a place *when there aren't no such place*. I call that very rum, I do.'

"'Well,' said I, 'and what are you going to do with the letter now you have got it? You can't deliver it, that is very clear.'

"'No, sir, we ain't got to deliver it. It's to be fetched; it's to wait till called for.'

"'And who is to call for it, pray?'

"'Ah, that's more than I can tell, sir. Him as wrote the letter with no name to it, I suppose.'

"'Now, I'll tell you what, my man. I am very anxious to see who fetches this letter. It will be called for presently, no doubt. Have you any objection to allow me to wait—there, in that back-room? Through the glass-door, I can see from behind that little curtain.'

"The man entered at once into what seemed to him a capital joke, and with alacrity he ushered me into a small, close-smelling parlor.

"'There, sir; you are welcome to sit here as long as you please; you'll disturb nobody. Me and my missis is not troubled with a family, so there will be nothing to disturb you neither.'

"'Thank you,' said I, as he handed me a chair; 'you must let me give you this for your trouble.'

"'Oh, no, sir, thank you, sir; but there is no occasion for that' (pocketing the money). 'You are welcome, I'm sure, sir—very welcome. You won't have to wait long, sir; and if you just raise the corner of the blind, like that, you can see anybody that comes into the shop. You won't have long to wait, I dare say.'

"But I had to wait long—very long. And I was sometimes tempted to wish the people had been blessed with a family. A romp with children would have beguiled the time better, at any rate, than the talk of the 'missis,' which related almost entirely to the high price of provisions. The master made his appearance constantly, with ever-varying expressions of astonishment at the non-appearance of a claimant for the letter, now and again bringing a drum of figs, and enticing me to soothe my impatience with one of the finest figs that had ever entered his shop. Will you believe that I watched at intervals in that back-parlor from Friday morning till the following

Tuesday, and no one came for your letter? And do you know that I believe I might have remained watching till the present moment, and have watched in vain? It was known I was there; I feel no doubt about that. At length, tired out, I left for Lincoln, after giving the postmaster my address, and begging him to let me know instantly if the letter was fetched. In the evening of the day of my arrival at Lincoln, I got this letter from the Alfrington postmaster:

"'SIR,—You had not been gone from our house half an hour, when a party came and asked for the letter. It was a man—a gentleman—a tall party—a stranger. Not having seen him in Alfrington before.

"'I am, sir, your humble servant,
"'H. GREEN (Post-office).'

"This letter reached me at Lincoln, as I told you, and you may imagine my state of mind after reading it. I was quite at a loss how to proceed. My Lincoln friends were Nottingham people, who had lived in that town for many years, having removed to Lincoln quite recently. I told them my story, and succeeded in interesting the head of the family—a shrewd man of the world enough—who, after convincing himself and me that no such family as the Streets, and no such place as Elm Tree House, existed in the neighborhood of Nottingham, suggested that I should write a letter to Mr. Street to the address—the only address—he had given to Mrs. Baker, namely, Post-office, Nottingham, explaining my feelings towards his sister, and my intentions also; appealing to him as a gentleman to reply to me, and explain the mystery that seemed to surround his sister. I begged him to tell me if her hand were free; and if it should not be free, I should expect that my letters would be returned to me.

"The letter was written and immediately despatched, and by return of post I received the following reply:

"'SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter. I am at a loss to conceive how any person calling himself a gentleman could have acted as I find you have done. I consider your conduct in addressing a young lady, living, as my sister was, under the protection of Mrs. Baker, without first ascertaining whether your attentions were approved by that lady, not to say by Miss Street's relatives, dishonorable in the extreme.

You have already caused deep pain and anxiety to Miss Street's friends; and to put a stop to any further attempts, I have to inform you that my sister's *hand and affections are already engaged.* As to the explanation of what you are pleased to term "a mystery," I am at a loss to understand what you mean. This is the first time that such a term has been applied to what concerns my family.

"'I am, sir, your obedient servant,
"'B. STREET.
"'Captain Hill, etc.

"'P.S.—I return your letters.'"

"Here, my dear Mr. Frith," said Captain Hill, "ends all I can learn about the Street family. With respect to Mr. Street's amiable epistle, and his assertion that his sister's affections 'are already engaged,' all I have to say is that I will not rest till I hear the truth, or falsehood, of that from the young lady herself."

"And how do you propose to manage to do so?" asked I; "for after the letter you have just shown me, signed by Mr. Street, who declares himself to be the young lady's brother, it must be obvious to you that I cannot lend myself to an assignation here."

"The lady's brother!" exclaimed the captain. "The man is no more the lady's brother than I am. I suspect him to be—no matter what—one who detains her—one who has some power over her that he exercises against her consent. After what has taken place between me and Miss Street I am confident that if her affections are engaged at all, they are engaged to me. Even in my sister's presence she—but why should I bore you with all this? I can feel with you that you cannot permit of our meeting here, but you can have no objection to tell me when she is to sit for her picture again."

"I have heard it said," replied I, "that 'all is fair in love and war.' I demur to the aphorism; and unless you will give me your word that you will not attempt to see Miss Street in this house, I will seal my lips about her sitting, and about anything I may learn of her in the future."

The captain rose, and paced the room in great agitation. After a while he said:

"I give you my word that I will not enter your house while Miss Street is in it. Will that do?"

"Yes. She sits to-morrow."

"And the time?"

I shook my head.

"Ah, well, you are very cautious. You are right, no doubt. All that remains for me to say is in the form of warmest thanks to you for listening so patiently to my troubles. The issue of them, which can't be far off, you shall know."

So saying, Captain Hill rose to go. I rang for my servant, who speedily appeared, and conducted my visitor down the steps to my front-gate.

Why this delay, O Susan, my servant? What can the gallant captain have to say to you? Can that be a note I saw you put into your pocket as you came smiling up the steps?

Miss Street came the next morning, according to her promise, but scarcely recognizable as the same girl; her color replaced by a dead pallor, her spirits gone, and her health seemingly broken. Her eyes constantly filled with tears, and she was moody and abstracted. In reply to my inquiries, she said her brother was not with her. She was staying at Blank's Hotel in Albemarle Street with Mrs. Golden, the lady who accompanied her, and she intended to return to Alfrington at the end of the week. She made one or two attempts to resume her former cheerfulness, but failed dismally; and the result as regards her portrait was unfortunate, for I felt that the last sitting was damaging in all respects; but when she returned from putting on cloak and bonnet in the bedroom (whither she had been taken by my housemaid, Susan, Mrs. Golden remaining with me), a perfect change had taken place. There were the old radiant manner and the winning smile.

O Susan, faithless domestic, you are the cause of this transfiguration!

"Susan," said I, "you have given Miss Street a letter from Captain Hill!"

"Yes, sir. She asked me if I hadn't had one give me by the gentleman. I said yes, and I give it to her."

"Indeed, you are a pretty— And what did she do with it, pray?"

"Oh, sir," said the girl, "she was like a mad thing. She kissed the letter all over, and hid it in her gownd."

The rest of the story of my mysterious model may be told in Captain Hill's words, as well as I can remember them. He had discovered—probably guessed—that Mr. Street and Mr. William Rivers were one and the same person. He had also found out Miss Street's address in Albemarle Street, and to Blank's Hotel he betook himself.

"I asked for Miss Street's rooms," said the captain, "and was shown up-stairs. A gentleman was writing at a table. He rose as I entered, and took my card from the waiter. He was the tall, handsome person you describe Mr. Rivers to be, and when he had read my name he turned upon me, his face absolutely livid, and in a voice quivering with passion he said, 'What is the meaning of this visit? I have nothing to say to you. These are my private rooms.' Then looking again at my card, he continued, 'You are the man who has been pestering Miss Street with your detestable addresses. I must insist on your leaving this room.'

"'Not till I have had some explanation of your position as regards Miss Street. You are, I presume, Mr. William Rivers, or Mr. Street, or whatever you choose to call yourself. Miss Street is of age, and even if you be her brother, which I take leave to doubt, you will have to convince me of your right to control her inclinations before I will leave your room.'

"'Sir,' said he, 'I altogether dispute your right to question me. I see by your card that you are the person who wrote an avowal of most ungentlemanly conduct, and I answered you; if you have come here in person on the same errand, you will receive, *vivâ voce*, the same response.'

"This was said in a tone of suppressed passion. I felt my own passion rising as I replied:

"'Before I can accept *your* decision in this matter, I will be satisfied with respect to your relations with Miss Street, and your right of answering in her name.'

"'My — my relations with Miss Street!' exclaimed Rivers (Rivers he was, I felt sure). Then, after a pause of some moments, in which he succeeded in assuming a calmer manner, he said, 'Will you be satisfied—will you pledge your honor to cease this persecution, if you hear the lady's determination from her own lips ?'

"'If it prove unfavorable to me,' said I, 'I will never trouble her or you again.'

"'This you declare upon your honor ?'

"'Upon my honor.'

"Mr. Rivers, *alias* Street, went to an inner door, opened it gently, and called 'Clara !' There was no response. In the dead stillness the beating of my heart was painful. Presently the door was pushed back, and Miss Street entered the room. Traces of recent tears were on her cheeks; she turned deadly pale on seeing me, and leaned upon a chair for support.

"'You know this gentleman ? He is desirous to hear from your own lips that the letter I had occasion to write to him—declining, on your behalf, to accept his addresses on the ground of your affections being already engaged—was written with your sanction and approval.'

"A flood of tears was the only reply.

"'Pray speak, Clara. Are you, or are you not, promised to me? Do you, or do you not, owe everything to me—your education, your position in the world, your—'

"'Yes,' she interrupted, 'I owe you all you say, and' (with a look at me that will remain with me as long as I live) 'I cannot marry any one but you; and if I cannot feel the love I ought, I can be grateful, and will always try to be a good wife.'

"'There, sir; there, you hear!—why, the girl is about to faint! Go, sir, go! You have had your answer.'"

Captain Hill never married. His regiment went to India, and I read the captain's name in a list of the severely wounded after one of the frequent battles during the mutiny. Whether he died or recovered from his sword and love wounds I never knew; nor did I ever hear more of the fate and fortune of my mysterious model.*

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* I told the story related above to a friend many years ago, and it was published by him in a number of *Temple Bar* in the year 1860. My friend put what Sir Walter Scott called "a cockit-hat" upon it, in the form of a dramatic ending which truth compels me to say existed only in my friend's imagination. The facts, interesting or not, occurred just as I have related them.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JOHN FORSTER AND THE PORTRAIT OF CHARLES DICKENS.

John Forster, author and journalist, was the intimate friend of Charles Dickens. On casual acquaintances Forster's brusque manner produced a very unfavorable impression; but when he became better known it was evident enough that the rough exterior concealed a generous heart, as well as a refined mind. I think it was in 1854 that I first made Forster's acquaintance in a call he made upon me to ask me to paint a portrait of Dickens for him. To this I gladly assented, and something was said (but nothing definite) about fifty pounds as the sum to be paid for the picture, and I professed myself ready to begin at any time. A few weeks passed, and I began to think that either Dickens had declined to sit, or that Forster had broken his engagement, when the latter came to me in trepidation. Dickens had started a mustache, and horrified his friend. The portrait must wait; the summer must pass away, and the mustache with it. Four years passed, but the mustache remained. The disfigurement, according to Forster, increased by a beard, which almost covered the chin. The great author was, as I have already said elsewhere, deaf to all appeals. "The beard saved him the trouble of shaving, and much as he admired his own appearance before he allowed his beard to grow, he admired it much more now, and never neglected, when an opportunity offered, to gaze his fill at himself. If his friends didn't like his looks, he was not at all anxious for them to waste their time in studying them; and as to Frith, he would surely prefer to save himself the trouble of painting features which were so difficult as a mouth and a chin. Besides, he had been told by some of his friends that they highly approved of the change, because they now saw less of him.

I think the following letters will interest, as showing the writer's strong desire that a satisfactory portrait of Dickens should remain when all connected with it have passed away. I desire their publication very earnestly, because they show Forster's true character, that of a liberal, unselfish, and amiable man, too generously appreciative of, and far too complimentary to, my own share in the Dickens portrait:

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, W., *March* 29*th*, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—My wife, who has the double purpose of seeing Mrs. Frith and the picture, will go to Pembridge Villas to-day—as I believe—and whether *you* are at home or not. Therefore, she expects to be permitted to see it, *and* Mrs. Frith.

"For myself, I never doubted your perfect success from the first moment I saw the canvas. The picture is, indeed, all I wished—more than I dared to hope—because I know what a ticklish thing a likeness is, and how portraits, otherwise admirable, fail often in that without which all other merits must fall short. I most sincerely thank you for all the kind exertions you have made, for all the conscientious pains and labor you have given.

"I was about to write, when I had your letter, to ask you to be so kind as to tell me the price in which I am indebted to you for the picture. When that is settled, I am glad to think that I shall still remain your debtor, for that zeal and care and interest which I cannot repay. You will, I am sure, kindly let me know as to this.

"I fear you will think me churlish, but, though I cannot go into the reasons now, I shall hope hereafter that I may be so fortunate as to convince you that my reasons are not very selfish, for not wishing or proposing that the portrait should be engraved. I should grieve, indeed, if this involved anything contrary to a wish you have formed. Indeed, I think my reasons, good as I think them, could hardly be held against that.

"As to the other subject of your note, I will make immediate inquiry as to that. I know the lord mayor and some of the aldermen very well. But I'll write further as to that. Forgive great haste now. (I'll call before the picture goes in.)

"Ever, my dear Frith, most sincerely yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, W., *April* 8*th*, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—I found your letter, dated the 5th, on my table in Whitehall Place yesterday morning. I had already written to you (on Wednesday) of the great pleasure the completed picture gave me. I saw it on Saturday afternoon, when I left a special message for you; but I had no card with me, and doubtless your servant forgot to tell you I had called.

"What you say of the interest expressed in the portrait does not in the least surprise me. I knew always that such would be the effect of a successful likeness, by such a painter as yourself, of a man so popular as Dickens; and as frankly I will say to you, that I have ever regarded the interest so likely to be inspired by this portrait, not as a matter in which strangers were to be permitted to speculate, but as a part of the property or possession to which my old friendship with Dickens entitled me, when the time for redemption of his old promise to sit for me, so often renewed and so long waited for, should arrive. Assuming that I am warranted in saying (for confirmation or disproof of which you will naturally refer to himself) that Dickens so consented to sit as a special favor to me, I hope that, without any particular selfishness, I may venture, in so far as this portrait is concerned, to put forward some claim to share in that origination or invention of the subject which in effect constitutes its 'copyright.'

"You will at the same time do me the justice to admit, that in this or any other respect I have had no concealment from you. I felt that such a question might arise; and I asked Dickens, if the opportunity presented itself to him, to express to you unreservedly my objection to having the portrait engraved. I was also specially anxious that this should be clearly conveyed to you *before* you were requested to fix the price of the picture. For, of course, I threw over altogether what had passed upon that part of the subject (through our friend Egg) when you first undertook the portrait, four years ago; and I endeavored, as plainly as I might, in writing the other day to ask you to name the price, to imply that the sum to be stated should exclude ulterior arrangements as to copyright.

"Most desirous have I also been to make it clear to you that I sought no pecuniary or speculative advantage for myself in all this—that, in fact, I had made such a disposition of the picture, after my death, as precluded any such possibility now or at any future time. I have bequeathed the portrait to the National Collection, as (thinking it might not displease you to know so much) I told you that it was my intention to do before you began to paint it.

"I did not mean to detain you so long with matter so strictly personal. But I should grieve indeed if you thought I had not behaved throughout with perfect candor, as well as fairly and justly. Retaining the views I have held and stated all along, I have no alternative but to adhere to my objection in the matter of the engraving; but I will give you for the portrait (it being understood that it comes to me direct from the Academy) double the sum you have asked in your letter of the 5th—namely, three hundred guineas. And I have only to add that this arrangement will be quite satisfactory to me—that it will leave me grateful to you for all the pains and care you have taken, and that I shall continue to consider myself, with every feeling of admiration and regard, your debtor in a transaction with which I shall never associate any but the most pleasant remembrances.

"Will you give me a line in reply, kindly confirming this arrangement? and believe me,

"My dear Frith, most sincerely yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, W., *Monday, April* 11*th*, '59.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—I enclose a check for a hundred and fifty guineas, and will send you another similar check (for same amount) in July. If the delay in the latter payment, however, should be in the least degree inconvenient to you, *pray do not scruple to say so*, and (without any real inconvenience to myself) you shall have it next month.

"Perhaps, in sending two lines of acknowledgment as to safe receipt of enclosed, you will kindly express that it is the first half of the sum of, etc., etc., in payment for the Dickens portrait and copyright. We do not want any such memorandum for ourselves, but it is well to save others from any possible misunderstanding.

"Yours, my dear Frith, always most truly,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, W., *May* 3*d*, 1859.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—A great pressure has been put upon me by some friends—particularly Mr. Macready, who has been very urgent indeed with his remonstrances—in the matter of permitting the Dickens picture to be engraved.

"Upon the whole, I do not feel, therefore, that I have been quite right in the tone I took, and I am content to withdraw the objection I formerly expressed.

"The only condition I should hope I may be able to make, would be to impose a certain ascertained and definite limit of time for the engraver to return me the picture in.

"Will you be kind enough, then, to make the necessary arrangements?

"I need hardly, of course, say, that whatever is given by the publisher beyond the one hundred and fifty offered by me for the copyright, I shall be rejoiced to think that you will obtain.

"Believe me ever, most truly yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

"46 MONTAGU SQUARE, *Friday Night*, 6*th May*, '59.

"MY DEAR FRITH,—I am glad you are pleased, because that helps me through the difficulty I still felt. I yielded to others—not to any conviction of my own. And as 'Hudibras' says of the man convinced against his will, I am naturally of my own opinion still. But I saw that it might hereafter be fairly made matter of reproach to me, and that, as I should probably have to yield some day, it was better to do so in the first freshness of the picture, and when the person best entitled to profit by the arrangement—yourself—would have the opportunity of doing so. And in this you have the whole truth of the case.

"I earnestly hope that it will be limited decisively to the twelve months, and as I think I have some knowledge of Mr. Barlow, as an obliging and gentlemanly man, as well as a most skilful engraver, I shall propose some early meeting between him and you and myself, with a view to an arrangement of periods most suitable and satisfactory to us all. I should be glad if he could so arrange as to be ready for the picture when it leaves the Academy, and take his first look at it then. But, of course, his time must be studied as well as mine.

"Will you kindly direct that the frame-maker send me his bill?

"And as Dickens dines quietly here on Monday next at half-past six, and I have just written off to ask Egg, I shall be very glad indeed if you happen to be disengaged and can come also. Only ourselves.

"Always most truly yours,

"JOHN FORSTER."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SECOND VISIT TO THE LOW COUNTRIES.

I DERIVED so much pleasure and, I fancy, improvement from my visit to Holland in 1850, that I determined to pay the Low Countries a second visit, and that resolution was now to be carried out. I had just suffered a heavy domestic bereavement, and a change for my daughters as well as for myself became very desirable. We therefore took ship for Belgium on an early day in May, and, with a rapidity that would have astonished our forebears, arrived in Brussels. I had never seen the Wiertz collection, said to be the work of a madman, and familiar no doubt to many of my readers. The sight of Wiertz's pictures is enough to convince one of the truth of Dryden's lines:

> "Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

In the case of this brilliant man the thin partition had given way—at intervals only, I think. At the end of his gallery there is a magnificent composition worthy of Rubens—a Last Judgment, Fall of the Damned, or some such thing—splendid in drawing, coloring, and composition. Other works no doubt disclose a "mind o'erthrown"—people struggling to release themselves from coffins, blowing off their heads, and otherwise indulging in mad freaks.

The visit to Wiertz was a sad one to me, convincing me, as it did, that but for the inscrutable missing of one link in the intellectual chain the artist might have added his name to the roll of the great painters of the world.

The great gallery at Brussels does not contain much to reward the painter-visitor. The Rubens pictures are not of his best, always excepting the Crucifixion, in which masterly drawing and splendid color vie with each other.

The figure of the Saviour, flanked by the thieves, is admirable; but the writhing body of the impenitent thief—whose roar of agony can almost be heard as cruel blows fall upon him—is beyond admiration, equal as it is to the best work of the great master. From my recollection of the Hague and its great collections, I was so eager to see if a second visit would confirm my favorable impression of the first that I hurried away from Brussels, and arrived in lovely weather at a place which must be a delight to all who visit it, whether they are picture-lovers or not. Our hotel *gave*, as they call it, on to a park with deer almost up to the door, and such walks! miles of avenues like cathedral aisles, with trees for columns, and interweaving branches overhead for Gothic roof-work; and the gallery containing the finest work of the Dutch school! I spent hours with Rembrandt, Jan Stein, Teniers, Ostade, Cuyp, Franz Halls, and other immortals—wondering, ever wondering, that in no country in the world could we now match these men. Religion did not inspire them; some of their finest works were produced in troublous times, when civil broil or foreign levy distracted their country; some, stranger still, when the painters were mere boys. Paul Potter, whose bull is a masterpiece of world-wide fame, died at the age of nine-and-twenty. Rembrandt's famous dissecting-picture was finished before he was twenty-six. These things were done at a time of life at which our youths are still struggling with the antique in the Academy schools. I must, however, claim for the modern artist that he is placed at a terrible disadvantage when compared with the painters of the Dutch school—in respect of the life that is always before him. Let my reader make a mental comparison between a group of bank-holiday-makers disporting themselves on Hampstead Heath and an array of peasantry in a picture by Teniers or Jan Stein—the former either dirty or primly smug, but in form and color eminently unpicturesque; the latter gay, with bright colors and dresses that call aloud to be painted. Some of our painters, feeling this so strongly, hurry off to Spain and Venice, with the happy result that we see in the works of my friends Fildes, Woods, and Burgess. But, admirable as the works of these men are, their producers would be the last to admit that they were on a level with their brethren of old. At the Hague we found Millais, to my great satisfaction, and it was delightful to hear his fresh and frank appreciation of those great masters.

We went to see the collection belonging to a count somebody or something, where were a few fine things and much rubbish—strange mixture. One would think the full appreciation of the one would insure the exclusion of the other; but "'tis ever thus" in private galleries, and more than it should be in public ones. Millais and his friends went with us to Amsterdam. Unfortunately the magnificent collection at this place was housed in small, ill-lighted rooms, since changed for appropriate galleries. Opposite to each other were Rembrandt's "Night Watch" and Van der Helst's famous "Meeting of Burghers of the Archers' Guild," each in its way a masterpiece; though I confess I have seen many pictures by Rembrandt that I prefer to this large work. The figures are all ill-drawn and out of proportion, and the light and shadow are somewhat artificial; the people are illumined by something that resembles neither day nor lamplight, and the picture seemed to me to suffer in comparison with the absolute reality and truth of the Van der Helst, every figure in which work is marked with the strongest individuality—a bright, clear daylight pervading the crowd of figures; each taking its place, and painted with a vigor and completeness that makes this one of the great pictures of the world. Then the delightful examples that meet you, in every part of the rooms, of all the marvellous Dutchmen! Franz Halls sits like a living man in a garden with his wife, whose sweet face smiles at you with an evanescent expression that you expect will change as you look.

At Haarlem there is a gallery filled with pictures by this man (who lived to a great age, and worked till the end of it), which greatly resemble the style of Millais. All these works represent companies of his countrymen, jovial gatherings, military assemblies, parochial meetings, and the like; their value resting—after the splendid dash and brilliancy of the execution—on their absolute truth;

a quality, I think, unattainable except under similar conditions.

The Six family, whose burgomaster ancestor was the friend and patron of Rembrandt, still exists at Amsterdam. I had heard that the house inhabited by the present Six contained many examples of the great Dutchman, but they were difficult of access. I therefore armed myself with an introduction, kindly given me by Tadema, and wended my way to the family mansion, an unpretending house close to one of the canals. Over a bell by the front-door was the name of Six, in small black letters. I was admitted, and shown into a room which, but for a few modern appliances, is exactly in the condition in which Rembrandt so often visited it. His pictures hang on the wall in their original black frames, and among them is a wonderful head of the burgomaster; the portrait finished except the hands. I was told that a dispute with the patron had occurred during the progress of the likeness, and the irate painter had refused to complete his work. Whether that was so or not, the picture remains to us, a marvel and a delight for all time.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

Messrs. Edward and William Finden were engravers of considerable reputation forty years ago. William, the younger, produced some exquisite book-plates, and others of more importance. The smaller prints appeared in the "Annuals" which were so popular during the first quarter of the century and far into the second. They were legion, the "Book of Gems" being perhaps the most popular. After a long reign the public wearied of them, and one after another they ceased to exist. The Findens, Heath, and other "Annual" publishers found the necessity of catering for their many readers in other forms. Heath hit upon the "Book of Beauty," with Lady Blessington as editor of it. The contents consisted of short stories and poems of unequal merit, and many of the beauties of London were pressed into the service, and figured as beauties; a claim, judging from some specimens, to which they had no right whatever. The Findens' venture was in the form of a series of female heads, in oval shape, from Moore's poems, and the title fixed upon was "The Beauties of Moore." A number of young artists living in intimate intercourse—myself, Egg, Elmore, Ward, and others—agreed to contribute. The sums we received for each picture varied from ten to fifteen pounds. "Lesbia," "Norah Creina," "Wicked Eyes," and "Holy Eyes," and many more, fell to me; so many, indeed, that I used up all the pretty models and any of my well-favored friends that I could persuade to sit. "Holy Eyes" became a great difficulty. None of our models had features or expressions that could help one to realize Moore's beautiful lines:

"Some looks there are so holy,
They seem but given
As shining beacons solely
To light to heaven."

Nor could I discover among my acquaintances a form that would assist me. On telling a friend of my difficulty, he said, "I think I can introduce you to a young lady who would be exactly what you want."

My friend, who was, and had long been, an invalid, then told me that his doctor, a man named Rose, in very fair practice, had recently married a young and beautiful girl.

"They are both coming to dine with me," said he. "Come and meet them, and then, if you find the lady won't do, nothing need be said. If, on the contrary, you find that I am right in my judgment of her, I think I can promise that Rose will only be too pleased to let her sit."

On the appointed day I put in an early appearance; and never can I forget, if subsequent and fearful events had failed to fix themselves upon my memory, the vision of exquisite loveliness that appeared, leaning on the arm of a somewhat saturnine-looking man considerably older than herself. Anything nearer to the complete ideal of female loveliness it would be impossible to conceive.

She was tall, of a perfect figure. Her features recalled the most beautiful of the antique statues; the statuesque perfection of her form was inspired by an expression I could not paint, and cannot describe beyond saying that it was like that we find in the angels of Botticelli—purity and holiness combined; and if, as I for one believe, the face is the index of the mind, then that mind should have been one that no mean, sordid, or sensual thought could enter.

The dinner was gay. The saturnine doctor told some good medical stories. And after dinner, when a whisper from me to my friend expressed my delight, and the hope that he might succeed in obtaining the great favor for me, he immediately went to the doctor and broached the subject. I watched the grave face anxiously enough, but could make no guess as to the success or failure of my friend, who presently returned to me and informed me that Dr. Rose would "think about it." This did not look quite hopeful. The evening ended by the doctor asking me for my address; he then promised that he would call and talk my request over.

In a few days the promised visit was paid. At his request I showed him two or three of the pictures just completed, and explained to him my straits in the matter of "Holy Eyes."

"Yes," said he, "I can see that my wife would do; and if you can persuade her to sit—I have as yet said nothing to her on the subject—I can have no objection. Will you dine with us on any disengaged day? You have my card. You will find my address No. — Harley Street."

A day was fixed, and the first sitting followed speedily. I found Mrs. Rose in every respect delightful. She drew fairly well, and had much love and taste for art. The sittings were too agreeable to allow of their being hurried over. I introduced Dr. and Mrs. Rose to my mother, who lived in Osnaburgh Street with my brother, sister, and myself—my painting-room being in Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square. An unusually rapid intimacy sprang up between us all. We were constantly at each other's houses; and the more I saw of the Roses, the better I liked them. It seems an odd remark to make at this point of my true story; but the disclosure is necessary to account in some degree for subsequent events. Rose never had the sense of smell.

One night, when I was reading in the dining-room, and meditating an immediate retirement to bed, I heard a loud ringing of the front-door bell, repeated still louder almost immediately. The servants and the rest of the family had gone to bed, and the house was closed for the night. I hurried to the front door, and, before I could open it, the bell rang again. To my amazement I found Rose, seemingly wet through—for the night was very stormy—his face marked with lines of passion and despair to such an extent as actually to change the man's appearance almost beyond recognition.

"Why, Rose, what's the matter?"

"Let me—let me in," he answered, in a hoarse whisper.

"Great Heaven," thought I, "is the man ill, or drunk, or what?" I supported him into the dining-room.

"Now, dear fellow, tell me what has induced you to knock me up at this time of night."

"Is that soda water?"

"Yes; have some?"

"And brandy, if you've got it."

"Now then, what is it that distresses you so?"

By this time the doctor's face was buried in his hands, and his tears and sobs were awful to witness. After a seemingly desperate struggle with himself, he looked into my face with an expression in his own never to be forgotten, and then said, calmly,

"I'm going to tell you something that you won't believe."

"Very likely," said I, with a forced smile. "What is it?"

"What is it—my God! what is it? Why, it's just this—my wife is a drunkard."

"You must be mad to say such a thing."

"Am I? Well, you go and see for yourself, my dear fellow. She is lying maudlin drunk on the sofa at this moment, and I see now she has been drunk night after night. I go out a good deal, you know, night and day. Several times lately, when I have returned, I have found her sitting up for me in a kind of semi-unconscious condition—stupefied with sleep and fatigue I thought, perhaps. Well, to-night I found her in the same kind of almost epileptic state, and by her side a tumbler with some white liquid. I tasted it, and it was gin! I could not smell it. I can't smell anything, or I might have found her out weeks ago, for I now hear from that d—d old nurse of hers—what a fool I was to let that woman into the house!—that she has been at it for months—for months, I tell you, beginning with brandy which that infernal woman gave her for some trifling ailment. Now look here, Frith: I haven't come here only to tell you all this. I want you and another friend of mine, a lawyer, to take the business into your hands, and arrange for a separation, for I will never live with that woman another day." This he emphasized with an oath too fearful to repeat.

I spent hours that night in reasoning with the poor fellow; and I succeeded at last in talking him into a calmer condition of mind.

"Go home now. I will go to Darrell, the lawyer, in the morning, and we will see what can be done."

He left me a shattered and most unhappy man. Darrell and I agreed that an attempt should be made to reform this young creature. We saw her, and after the first horror of having to acknowledge her dreadful habits to us, she declared solemnly and eagerly that if her husband would forgive her, she would consent to be placed in any institution he might appoint, and go through the severest discipline for any length of time. She felt confident, she said, that if the temptation were placed beyond her reach for a short time even, she would lose the taste for it, and a cure would be easy. She was very young, not much past nineteen, and it was impossible to see this fair young thing and listen to her pleading without being very much touched by it. Our difficulty was with the husband. For a long time he would not listen to us.

"She might go, and she should go ; she can drink herself to death, and then she will trouble nobody any more. And who, pray, ever heard of a woman, who had once acquired the habit, being reformed ?"

"I have," said Darrell, "four in my experience, and they were all older than your wife."

"Are you telling me the truth now, or is that what you lawyers call a legal fiction ?"

"It is the solemn truth," said Darrell.

We at last wrung from him a consent that the trial should be made, and it was made on the morning following. The Dipsomaniacal Institute was given up, and the young lady was consigned to the care of two elderly French ladies, who kept a school at Bridgewater—what is called, I believe, a finishing school, where only girls of a mature age are admitted. These ladies were, of course, made acquainted with every particular, and they cheerfully undertook the attempt at a cure.

Eighteen months passed away, bringing us (Rose would not hear of direct communication with himself) at intervals most cheering accounts. Mrs. Rose was the delight of all with whom she came in contact. At first everything in the shape of wine and beer was kept out of her sight; but soon she could be trusted to see them, though never to taste them, and she never showed the least desire to touch wine, beer, or spirits; in fact, she assured the elder of the French ladies that it was a mystery which perplexed her much, how she could ever have drunk what was offensive to her now—even to smell. All this was communicated to Dr. Rose; and at last, to our great happiness, he consentéd to receive her home again. But first she must sign a paper in the presence of myself and Darrell, in which she undertook, in many solemn words, never to touch alcohol in any form—wine or beer—except by the permission of her husband. The day of her arrival from Bridgewater we all dined together; the girl's beauty seemed to have increased, if possible, and it was an inexpressible satisfaction to Darrell and me to see our efforts crowned with success. Six weeks, or at most two months, had only passed, when Rose, returning home, found his wife in such a condition of drunkenness as only to leave her power to stagger across the room, fall at her husband's feet, cling about his knees, and implore him not to go and fetch me and Darrell, so that we might see what a "depraved wretch" she was. He rushed from the house to fetch us. There was an unnatural calm in Rose's manner when he announced the failure of our "well-meant efforts," as he called them.

"I am sorry," he said to Darrell, in bantering tones, "that you have not been able to add to your list of redeemed ones. As you were both witnesses to the woman's solemn pledge, you must come with me and see how well she has kept it."

Not another word was spoken till we arrived in Harley Street. Rose let us in by means of his latch-key, and led the way to the drawing-room. No one was there. He rang the bell.

"Where is your mistress?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Wait here, Darrell. I will go and look for her; she couldn't go out."

He left the room. Too distressed to talk to one another, we sat awe-struck. In a few moments we heard a cry that literally froze my blood. We rushed from the room. The cry was repeated, and a voice added, "Come here—come here!"

We descended the stairs, and met a frightened footman, who pointed to the surgery. We entered, and found Rose on his knees by the dead body of his wife. The smell of prussic acid that seemed to fill the surgery told the fate of the miserable girl.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE."

THE end of May found me at home and at work once more. My diary under May 28 says:

"Sketched out composition of a wedding-party, which might do, but fear it is not very interesting. In great despair about subjects."

This picture represents a bride and bridegroom on the point of leaving for the honeymoon. Their brougham waits; and a crowd of passers-by watch the departure, while from the doorsteps—on which the bride's family and friends are collected—come the usual showers of rice and slippers, and from a balcony above the portico guests take a last look at the newly-married. I was prompted to this subject by seeing an almost identical realization of it in Cleveland Square. The street crowd, through an avenue of which the lady and gentleman go to their carriage, is composed of street boys, the more inquisitive being kept back by a policeman with an unnecessary display of force; a Jew clothesman; a servant whose curiosity has stopped her on her way to post a letter; and, last and best part of the picture, a group of beggars who approach from the street, the man, his wife, and children illustrating the latter part of the title of the picture, "For Better, for Worse."

After much search I discovered a Jew of a very marked type, who consented to sit if I would make it "worth his while." He was a person in very humble circumstances, but his time was of enormous value. He declined to divulge the secret of its value, but he made such a demand as to place his services out of the question, unless it could be much modified.

"How many hours will you want me?"

"I can't tell; that will depend upon your sitting partly, and more on the way I can take advantage of it."

"Well, suppose we say ten shillings an hour; that's reasonable, ain't it?" said the Israelite.

"No, I think it is unreasonable, and quite out of the question," said I.

"Got any old clothes?"

"No."

"No! Vot do you do with 'em, then?"

"Wear them," I replied.

"Come, now, that von't do. Those you've got on ain't old ones!"

"No; these are my Sunday ones; and I don't want to waste any more of your valuable time, so unless you will agree to sit to me for three hours for the ten shillings, I will wish you good-morning."

"Make it twelve and six."

"No."

"Vell, then, say eleven, and it's a bargain."

"No, it isn't; ten is the outside."

"And some old clothes," said the man, with a frightful smile. "I can't say no fairer than that."

We struck the bargain, including the clothes; the old man declaring, when the sittings were over, that I was a very nice gentleman, and it had been a pleasure to him to oblige me, but he had been such a loser by the transaction that he hoped I would think of him when I had worn my Sunday suit a little longer, for it was "already too shabby for any gentleman to wear, let alone," etc. He called many times; but as I had paid him very well for his sitting, I desired my servant to say, in reply to his affectionate inquiry after my "Sunday suit," that, like the eagles, it "had renewed its youth," and had become so interesting to me, from my having worn it when painting from him, that I felt I could never part with it. Many years have passed, and I am at last free from the visits of my Jewish model.

Among the lookers-on at my wedding-party were an Italian boy and monkey. After acquiring a certain power of painting the human being, animals ought not to be very difficult; but then the animal must not be a monkey. Little children are maddening; but commend me to the most terrible of those in preference to a monkey. I suppose it is not possible that the monkey knew what I wanted, and was determined I should not get it; but his conduct could only be accounted for on that hypothesis. I desired his young master to hold the creature's head in the proper direction. For an instant he succeeded; then with a wriggle and a squeak the animal freed itself, slipped from his fingers, sprang on to my easel, and grinned at me from the top of it. This performance was constantly repeated, varied by attacks on the picture itself. I was thankful when at last " an exposition of sleep " came over the animal, and I managed to complete my work.

In a picture by Wilkie, in the National Gallery, called "The Parish Beadle," there is an admirable portrait of one of these disagreeable little brutes. In his diary, Wilkie says he was obliged to go to Exeter Change (then a large menagerie, on the site of the present Exeter Hall) on a Sunday, that being the only day on which he could do his work free from interruption. The artist was pursuing his task, when a much smaller monkey than his sitter worked his way through the bars of its cage and perambulated the room. The menagerie consisted of a set of large rooms, in which many animals were confined in separate cages. In the room in which the painter was working, a tiger was fast asleep. The monkey, with the curiosity peculiar to his species, made his way to the tiger through the bars into the den, which he investigated to his satisfaction; but, unfortunately, in retreating he tried to make a short cut to the bars over the body of the tiger. The tiger awoke—a scream ! a blow from a paw !—and in a few moments nothing of the monkey remained to point the moral attending the fatal effect of curiosity.

It was while painting the picture "For Better, for Worse," that an incident occurred which proved, in a remarkable manner, the difficulty with which the amateur model has to contend. Artists know how constantly persons unaccustomed to sitting, or rather standing — in the fatiguing attitudes required—are attacked by fainting-fits so suddenly as to require a constant lookout on the part of the painter for the premonitory symptoms that he knows so well—a deadly pallor overspreads the face, the lips become colorless, and, unless a change of attitude is afforded at once, the model falls to the floor, and work is over for the day. On the occasion I speak of a boy was standing for me in an easy position, with his hands in his pockets. I was at work upon his face, and saw no sign of a change in his complexion ; when, without moving his hands from his trousers, he fell like one shot. I have known soldiers, boxers, and the like, powerful-looking men, unable to endure the strain of standing still in one position, though the action may be simple and easy enough, for a quarter of an hour without sensations — which they declare they have never felt before—incapacitating them for a time. In one of my friends' studios a girl fell into a stove and disfigured herself for life.

The picture "For Better, for Worse," together with an episode in the life of Swift, formed my contributions to the Exhibition of 1881.

The mystery attending the relations existing between Swift, Stella, and Vanessa will probably never be solved. That he really married the former has been doubted; but it is sure that his heartless treatment of Vanessa shortened her life.

That Hester Vanhomrigh — otherwise Vanessa — was deeply in love with Swift, and that she expected and hoped to be his wife, there can be no doubt. That she had warrant for her belief Swift's own words prove ; and when the rumors of the marriage of her lover with her rival reached Vanessa, what so natural, what so straightforward, as her appeal to Stella for the truth or falsehood of the report ! The appeal took the form of a letter of inquiry, and the letter fell into the hands of Swift. Readers of that great genius's works, and students of his life, need not be told of the effects of such a letter upon a man who was the victim of passion so uncontrollable as to affright beholders of its results.

With the letter in his hand Swift galloped from Dublin to Miss Vanhomrigh's house, some miles away, leaped from his horse, and rushed, unannounced, into her presence; then, without speaking a word, but with a look that froze her blood, he threw the letter on to the table and left her forever.

The unhappy woman, heart-stricken, faded from that day, and died soon after.

I could find no authority for the likeness of Vanessa, but for Swift the portrait by Jervas proved all that I could desire. It is an excellent picture, and from its strong character must be a good likeness. The man was very handsome, and as he sits smiling on Jervas's canvas one finds it as difficult to imagine those features twisted out of shape, and distorted by passion, as it is to conceive a tranquil summer sea, with its tiny waves breaking silently on the shore, transformed into a storm-driven ocean.

I found the subject I had chosen a very difficult one. I fear it required a more powerful pencil than mine to portray the crushed heart and mind of Vanessa or the lightning fury of Swift.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MODELS—THIEVISH.

There is no doubt that one of the great difficulties besetting a painter's life is the procuring of models suitable to so much variety of character as certain subjects require for their realization. Scarcely a day — certainly never a week—passes without applicants for sittings making their appearance in artists' studios, of all ages, from the baby in arms to the man of eighty. Still, the exact type wanted may fail to present itself; in that case the streets or friends' houses must be searched, and often in vain. Considering that all who apply to us are perfect strangers, and that we are often obliged to leave them alone in our rooms, it is surprising and creditable to the model profession generally that so few instances of theft ever occur.

I was once very nearly being a victim at the hands of a small boy, whom I had picked up in the street to serve as model for a crossing-sweeper. The young gentleman was, in fact, in the practice of that profession when I addressed him, and easily persuaded him to come in his rags and with his broom to my rooms. I had taken a foolish fancy to paint a small picture of a lady at a crossing, waiting till her passage might be made safely, and paying no attention to a crossing-sweeper, who was to be represented in the usual begging attitude. The figure of the lady in the picture was in a fair way towards finish before I succeeded in finding the boy I wanted. He sat two or three times fairly well, and I appointed him to come for a final sitting. His hair was cut very short; his face, though not good-looking, was full of character, and I succeeded pretty well in getting a good likeness of him. In those days it was my custom (long discontinued) to dine in the middle of the day, and at the same time to send the models their luncheon. Before I left the studio for my dinner I had occasion to wind up my watch; I performed the operation, and placed a short gold chain and key used for the purpose upon the chimney-piece. On my return from dinner I found my young model fast asleep. The day was warm, the luncheon was plentiful, the boy was tired, and I let him sleep on. After a while we went on with our work, finished it successfully, and the time had arrived to pay the model and despatch him. I had forgotten the chain and key till that moment. I looked for it in the place on the chimney-piece—it was gone! I knew no one had been into the room but the servant, for whom I rang; and to my inquiry after my property I received the reply I expected —she had seen nothing of it.

"Did you see anything of my chain and key?" said I to the boy.

"No, sir."

"Yes you did, for I saw you looking at me when I was winding up my watch."

"I never see no chain."

"Now, look here, my boy: no one has been into the room; the chain couldn't walk away, and you must have it."

"Me, sir! S'help me, if it was the last word—"

"Hold your tongue, and produce the chain, or I will send for a policeman and give you in charge."

"I don't care for no policeman, and I don't know nothing about no chain."

"We shall soon see about that," said I, as I directed my servant to fetch a policeman, at the same time giving the girl a sign that told her not to take my order literally.

I looked at the boy as he sat on a high chair, his broom between his legs, which he dangled about in a careless, independent manner. Presently he began to cry.

"Come here, sir!" said I, and he shuffled towards me. "Now, where are your pockets?"

"Ain't got no pockets."

I felt about his jacket, and certainly there was no pocket, nor any other receptacle for stolen property; but in submitting the ragged trousers to a closer scrutiny I came upon something harder than rag, and after a little perseverance I extracted one of my cigars from the lining of the young gentleman's inexpressibles. Tears and sobs increased very much.

"Now," said I, "produce the chain, or as sure as you are born I will lock you up."

The weeping ceased as suddenly as it had begun; the boy wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, and then, applying his fingers with a dexterous twist to the back of his neck, he drew out my chain and key from the region of the spinal column—rather low down apparently, for he was obliged to throw out his elbow to a height that nothing but long practice could have enabled him to accomplish —and my property was restored to me.

"I know where you live," said I, "and I shall make a point of telling your father of this; and what do you think he will say to you?"

"He'll whack me."

From information afterwards received, I believe a "whacking" would certainly have been bestowed, but it would have been administered in consequence of the young gentleman's failure in his attempt to rob me. After a severe lecture I dismissed my thievish model. On leaving home for my afternoon's walk, within a few paces of my front door I met a policeman.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the man; "might you be the landlord of this house?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, sir, I see a boy come out of your back gate, which I know something about. What might he be doing of on your premises?"

I explained the reason of the boy's appearance.

"Ah," said the policeman, "perhaps you don't know as that boy is one of the worst thieves in London; he's only just out of prison. Didn't you notice his 'air, with the prison-cut quite fresh? You'll be having your house robbed, sir. That boy's father is a thief, so's his mother, and his sister. There is always one or other of 'em in prison."

After this warning I need scarcely add that I saw no more of my thievish model.

CHAPTER XL.

"OLD MASTERS."

A PORTION of the year in which the pictures of "Swift, etc.," were produced was spent in the service of the Winter Exhibition of Old Masters. My duties took me into strange places, and among strange, though often agreeable, people, all more or less curiously ignorant of the value of the treasures in their keeping, and sometimes fancying whole housefuls of rubbish gems of art. One of my first visits was paid to a huge mansion in the north. The rooms were crowded with pictures of all shapes and sizes, heirlooms, etc. A single glance was sufficient; daub after daub filled my afflicted vision, while I waited for my cicerone, who presently appeared, catalogue in hand, in the shape of one of the young ladies of the family.

"May I ask who that picture is painted by?" said I, pointing to a Wardour Street example.

"That is by Titian—'A Holy Family.'"

"Ah! and this one?"

"That" (refering to catalogue) "is by—by—Domy—Dom—my sister writes so badly I can't quite make out."

"Oh, Domenichino," said I. "Is it?—very interesting—I never saw a picture of foxhounds by that painter before."

"Yes," said my cicerone; "'Pack of hounds, fox breaking cover.'"

"Dear me," I said, "the people in those days dressed pretty much as they do now—red coats, top-boots, and everything."

"So they did," rejoined the young lady; "and Domy—what do you call him, lived many years ago, didn't he?"

"Yes, about three hundred or thereabouts; but perhaps he was a prophet as well as a painter, and could foresee the kind of dress that would be worn in England a few centuries after his death."

I went steadily through this remarkable gathering without finding a single picture above contempt.

"Now," said my young friend, "you must come into the billiard-room; it is quite full of portraits of our ancestors, by Vandyke, but before you see them I am to tell you that we cannot let them go to London—any other picture you can have."

To my surprise I found the Vandykes were very fair specimens of Lely—one or two excellent.

"These are by Vandyke, are they?" said I.

"Yes. They have been here ever since they were painted. Mamma has all the receipts from Vandyke for the different sums paid for the pictures."

"My duty," said I, "is simply to report upon the works I see, to the Council of the Royal Academy; you will no doubt hear from them on the subject."

"Oh, I had nearly forgotten one of our greatest pictures, always *so* much admired; it is by Gainsborough, on the staircase. You won't mind taking the trouble to mount the stairs?"

I followed my guide up several flights of stairs, and at length found myself opposite a whole-length life-sized portrait of a man in armor, as worn during the reign of Elizabeth—a vile picture.

"Are you sure this is by Gainsborough?" I inquired.

"Perfectly, and it is thought by good judges "(emphasis on *good judges*) "to be a very *fine* Gainsborough."

"Then that great artist," said I, "has adopted a method curiously in opposition to Domenichino, for he has gone back a couple of centuries to paint some one he couldn't possibly have seen."

My cicerone seemed bewildered. I thanked her for her attention, and wished her good-day. My reader may doubt the truth of the above, but the facts occurred just as I have told them.

The pictures of Reynolds are so much desired for the Winter Exhibition that neither trouble nor expense are spared in searching for them; so hearing of one, described to me as of unusual splendor, I made a journey into Wales with the solitary Reynolds for its object. The owner was from home, but the lady of the house received me very courteously, and, though unable to promise to lend the picture to the Academy, she allowed me to see it.

"My husband's great-grandmother, by Sir J. Reynolds, considered by connoisseurs as his finest work."

"It is a very fine picture indeed," said I; "but it was not painted by Reynolds."

"Not painted by—why, I can show you Sir Joshua's receipt for his fee!"

I had a difficult game to play. I wanted the picture very much, for it was a very beautiful Romney, so I fear I rather played the hypocrite, and pretended to doubt my own judgment; finally the picture was sent to Burlington House accompanied by a letter from the owner, which informed the council that, though doubt had been thrown upon the picture by Mr. Frith, who had told Lady Blank that the painter of the work was not Sir Joshua Reynolds, he, the proprietor, possessed such convincing evidence to the contrary, that unless the picture could be described in the catalogue as by Reynolds, he would be obliged to the council if they would send it back immediately. We were greatly troubled; it was impossible to stultify ourselves by putting the name of Reynolds to a palpable Romney, and we were very anxious to exhibit the picture. A letter was therefore written by the secretary informing the owner of the Sir Joshua (by order of council) that his Reynolds was a Romney, and must be exhibited as such, or not at all. Like a sensible man Lord Blank gave way, and his great-grandmother, a very lovely young creature, proved one of the most attractive pictures in the Winter Exhibition of 1881.

As I find I visited thirty-eight different collections of old masters, and named for selection over three hundred pictures, an idea may be formed of the almost inexhaustible wealth of ancient art in this country. I forget the name of the owner of the house in which I found two very fine half-length portraits by Romney, representing a lady and gentleman—husband and wife, I think—the lady very charming, the gentleman of a strongly-marked individuality, his expression conveying the idea of a somewhat irascible temper. On inquiry, I was told that the face was the "index of the mind," the owner of it being in the habit of giving way to paroxysms of fury that made him a terror to all offenders, his servants especially. After the death of his wife the fits of passion became more frequent. This gentleman had a large acquaintance, and was a constant diner-out. Living in the country, and his friends' houses lying at varying distances from his own, his carriage was in frequent requisition, the rule being for the coachman to drive his master home, when that gentleman, opening the carriage door, would let himself into his house. On one boisterous night the customary programme was enacted; and the coachman, after pausing at the door as usual, drove to the stables, housed the carriage, and afterwards stabled the horses. He then went to his supper, and was surprised by an inquiry by a footman after his master.

"Master!" said the coachman; "why, he let himself in as usual half an hour ago, and he is in bed and asleep by this time."

"No, that he can't be," said the footman. "He always rings for me, and I've heard nothing of him. Anyway, I'll go and see."

The man returned presently.

His master couldn't be in the house. He was not to be found anywhere.

The coachman stared at his fellow-servant for a moment, then hastily rose from the supper-table, beckoning the footman to follow—warning him to make no noise. The two went stealthily together to the coach-house, where they found their master sound asleep in his carriage.

"Lend a hand with the harness," said the coachman.

In a few minutes the horses were harnessed and attached to the carriage, and the irritable passenger, still asleep, was driven to his house-door. Here it was found necessary to wake him, and with an exclamation, "Why, bless my soul, I must have been asleep!" he entered his house, never suspecting, or to the end of his life ever knowing, that he had spent part of the night in his own coach-house.

Numberless examples of the ignorance of collectors or inheritors of pictures might be given, but I will add only one more instance of strange credulity, for the truth of which my colleague in the search for old pictures, Mr. Horsley, R.A., is responsible. In one of his wanderings in the north of England my friend was told that he must not leave that part of the country without seeing a picture which had just arrived from abroad—no less than a Leonardo da Vinci, valued at three thousand guineas. The picture had been consigned to a distant relative of the owner, with a view to its sale at Christie & Manson's in the spring. Though Mr. Horsley had long journeys and hard work on his hands, the temptation to secure, if possible, so rare a treasure as a fine work by one of the greatest ornaments of the Italian school was too great to be resisted. The picture also appeared with such strong evidences of authenticity as to make its genuineness almost unquestionable. The family for which the great artist painted the picture had transmitted it from father to son down to the representative now living, etc.

It is the rule with those who have the selection of the Winter Exhibition pictures to refrain from giving their personal opinion of works offered. The owners are always told that the decision rests with a committee formed expressly to decide—after reports from the selectors—as to what shall or shall not be exhibited. But when candid opinion is asked, it is often as candidly given. In the case of the Leonardo, the artist was so pressed by the consignee (who had no interest in the picture, and considerable doubt of its authenticity) to give his real opinion of its commercial value, that he did not hesitate to appraise it at five pounds, provided always the picture were sold in its frame; the latter, a good old carved one, being worth about that sum.

"In that case," said the temporary custodian, "it will be of no use sending the picture to London for sale."

"Not unless you will take five pounds for it," said Horsley.

"But how can this be ascertained so as to convince the owner?"

"Well," replied the artist, "I will give you a letter of introduction to Messrs. Christie. I will write it now, here, if you like. You shall see it, and I will give those gentlemen no clew to my own opinion. Send the picture to King Street. Ask what it will be likely to fetch under the hammer there, and you will most likely find that my estimate of the value is pretty nearly correct."

The advice was taken. The Leonardo da Vinci was sent to Christie & Manson, with the inquiry proposed by Mr. Horsley. The eminent firm regretted to say that there would be no chance of the picture selling for more than the value of the frame, which might reach five pounds. It is curious that without any communication with the artist the auctioneers should have named the precise sum fixed by him.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SUCCESSFUL DEALER.

Louis Victor Flatow, picture-dealer, was the son of a poor Austrian Jew, so poor as to be unable to give his son education enough to enable him to read or write. In lieu of teaching, when the son had arrived at the age of eleven the father placed in his hands some sheaves of lead-pencils and told him to be off and get his own living; "and from that time till now," said Mr. Flatow, "and I'm between forty and fifty—though I don't look it—I have got my own living." How that was managed for some years Louis Victor declined to say, beyond acknowledging that the lead-pencil scheme was very soon exchanged for some other, by which he managed to exist, till fate or chance threw in his way a Belgian who dealt in "old masters." The "old-master pattern," as Flatow called it, succeeded in filling the pockets of his employer without having much effect upon his own; and whether because he was shocked by the tricks of that trade, or disappointed with their results as regarded his own future, is not known, but after some experience of the business he left his employer and started on his own account.

I forget the name of the dealer in "old masters," but his pupil said he was one of those who acknowledged that honesty is the best policy, but "thanked God they could do without it." And if the account of the production of these ancient pictures, as practised by the Belgian, were true, honesty was certainly put on one side.

"There was a lot of young artists—clever chaps, some of 'em—copying away like fury in the public galleries; and when the copies were done he smoked and cracked 'em till you would never believe they were less than two hundred years old."

"And what is the next step?" said I.

"Why, they were sold as originals, of course, and those who bought them believed that they possessed the originals, and the Louvre or the Dresden Gallery the copies."

"That was very abominable," said I.

"Of course it was, and I got out of it as soon as I could," was the reply.

According to Mr. Flatow, though the roguish part of the "old-master" business was abandoned by him, he continued to deal in the "real thing" till he had formed a tolerably large collection of Titians and Raphaels; and not being successful abroad, he went to Edinburgh, and introduced his exhibition with a flourish of trumpets to the Scottish public. Whether the taste of the canny Scots was not sufficiently advanced for the appreciation of the merits of Raphael, or so much cultivated as to cause doubt of the originality of the Flatow collection, is not known; but it is quite certain that the show failed to attract. And, as the expenses were great, great was the failure; and the spirited collector left Edinburgh and the "old masters" behind him. "Never, sir, to go among such a scrubby lot as the Scotch again; with a final adoo to the old-master pattern."

The next step in the career of my illustrious friend has only to be accounted for on the hypothesis of some portion of his life, between the lead-pencil and the "old-master" period, being devoted to the study and practice of chiropodism; for his next appearance is in Spring Street, London, where the passer-by might have seen a golden foot disfigured by gigantic corns, and beneath it, on a brass plate, the words, "L. V. Flatow, Chiropodist."

Mr. Flatow was a very remarkable man, and whatever he undertook to do was done with an energy and devotedness common to great characters; but greatness cannot always make the opportunity necessary for its display, and the comparative failure of the corn-cutting proved that the hour for the glory of my friend had not yet struck. To beguile the weary time that was so ready to be devoted to the relief of his fellow-creatures, Mr. Flatow indulged himself with a game of billiards. It goes without saying that the game as played by the corn-cutter was splendid, so perfect, indeed, that no frequenter of the rooms of my friend Mr. Beckingham could be induced, even for the smallest stake, to enter the lists against him.

Mr. Beckingham is, or was, the proprietor of the Adelphi Cigar Stores in the Strand; the billiard-rooms are above the shop, and, after descending from the rooms one day, Mr. Flatow produced some cards, and thus addressed the amiable tobacconist:

"I see, sir, that you have a great many visitors to your establishment; sure, some of 'em—many of 'em, I hope—must be troubled with corns. Now you would oblige me very much—you would, in fact, be of great service to me—if you would distribute some of my cards; and if you happen to have a corn about you, I shall be happy to prove to you, free gratis for nothing, that I am well up in the business."

"I will try to serve you with much pleasure," said Mr. Beckingham; "and you can serve me, I assure you, for I am at this moment dreadfully troubled with a most persistent corn."

Patient and operator retired into a little room at the back of the shop; and in a few minutes, and with admirable skill, a painless operation was performed. I am sure, from what I know of Mr. Beckingham's amiable character, that he distributed many cards, adding strong commendation of Mr. Flatow's ability; but when destiny has prescribed a fate, corn-cutting cannot break the web, and the moment was near that was to signalize the commencement of the career of one of the most successful dealers in modern art that this country has seen.

Mr. Beckingham was well acquainted with an artist who, in his youth, had painted many pictures of great merit; but on arriving at mature age the public deserted him, and the difficulty of finding purchasers for his works became very great. Beckingham had bought some of his pictures, and had been the means of selling others; and on one occasion, when Flatow happened to be by, the artist produced two small pictures, for which he wanted ten pounds apiece. Flatow examined them, and said he flattered himself he knew something of the picture business; and if he might be trusted with the pictures he would either bring them, or the money for them, to Beckingham the next night. He was trusted, and he sold the pictures and received his commission in the ordinary way. Introductions to certain artists followed, and by some means or other Mr. Flatow obtained the command of a sufficient sum of money to enable him to "deal," though not at first very extensively.

I think it was when I was putting the last touches to the "Derby Day" that I first heard the name of Flatow from a friend of mine, who described him as a knowing Jewish picture-dealer, not beautiful to look at, but liberal and straightforward in all his engagements, and very anxious for an introduction to me. I was curious to see the man, and a day was named for his visit. I did not quite like his manner of approaching me; it was too deferential, too much as if I should be conferring an honor of which no human being could be worthy, if I would only paint a large picture for him, for which he was prepared to pay my price; and prepared also to devote superhuman energy to make an engraving from it successful. And as to the exhibition of it throughout the country, he would "perform with it himself."

A single glance at Mr. Flatow was enough to prove that a very energetic and astute individual stood before you—the Israelite strongly in evidence, and by no means a favorable type of that great race. That undisguisable feature, the mouth, was mercifully covered by a beard, and if it were at all in accord with the upper part of the face, the beard became a valuable cloak. I am always of opinion that the face is a sure index of character, but there are exceptions to every rule; and so far as my own dealings with Mr. Flatow were concerned I had every reason to be satisfied with his conduct. My first transaction with him was for my picture of "Claude Duval," followed by the "Railway Station," a work on the lines of the "Derby Day," and other modern-life subjects; and with the "Railway Station" came a signal success, greatly owing, I am sure, to the way in which Flatow "performed with it himself."

Five-and-twenty years ago there were no exhibitions of pictures in London except at the galleries of the Royal Academy, British Artists (Suffolk Street), and at the rooms of the Society of Painters in Water Colors. The separate exhibition of a picture was quite a novelty, and the "Railway Station," deservedly or not, attracted large crowds. It was then quite "alone in its glory," in a kind of dark gallery near the Haymarket Theatre, the picture being placed in the inner gallery; and from the outer room Mr. Flatow scanned his visitors, fixing with great acuteness on those whose appearance indicated the weakness of the victim, and proceeding at once to spread a snare, which usually caught a subscriber to the engraving. Every one knows the nuisance of the picture tout, whose persevering appeals for your name to be added to the already "long list of distinguished personages" who have subscribed, embitters your probably short time for examining a picture; and though I was often amused by the indomitable perseverance of my *entrepreneur*, it was my fate sometimes to hear uncomplimentary remarks on my picture and myself. On one occasion I remember hearing Mr. Flatow make a last appeal to a gentleman, whom he had been pestering for five minutes, in the following words:

"I feel sure that Mr. Frith would feel particularly proud to see your name, sir, in the list of subscribers to the fine engraving we are about to publish of this great work."

"From what I hear of Mr. Frith," said the gentleman, "he is conceited enough without any help from my name to make him more conceited than he is."

On another occasion a very old man tried to escape by saying, in reply to Flatow's assurance that the engraver would work with such extreme care that at least three years would be spent on the print:

"Why, sir," said the old gentleman, "I shall be dead before the engraving is done."

"Well, sir, then think what a blessing such a work would be to your children!"

"But I haven't got any," replied the old man, and once more Mr. Flatow was defeated.

Another time, after he had expatiated in glowing terms on the varied beauties of the picture, the intended victim replied:

"Indeed, ah! I can't agree with what you say. You don't know me, do you? I thought not. Well, I am an artist myself, and if I couldn't paint a better picture than that I would go home and hang myself."

One of Mr. Flatow's favorite figures of speech was, "Lord bless you! there ain't a dealer in London that knows how to manipulate a customer; you must walk round 'em as a cooper walks round a tub."

I suppose no picture exists that has escaped hostile criticism. Certainly the "Railway Station" received an abundant share; and I remember showing my employer rather a severe dose of it in a weekly paper. Then, for the first time, I became certain that my friend could not read. I gave him the periodical, and pointed out the column of abuse, and by his expression I saw the page was sealed to him. He gave the paper back to me and said, "Who cares what such a d—d fool as that says!" He could write his name in curious hieroglyphics, and he could read simple words in large capitals; and I have often been amused by the way he paraded his learning as he walked along the streets.

"Ah, large place that infirmary, I see!"

"What's that? Oh, Hospital for Incurables!" I added.

"They haven't let that house yet, I see. Suppose the neighborhood's going down."

I never had a doubt that Flatow—proving, as he did, a very remarkable person without having had the advantage of education—would have provided for himself some conspicuous position in the world, and have filled it well, under happier circumstances. He could not read, but many books had been read to him by a devoted wife; and with the whole of Dickens' works he was familiar, their perusal producing profound admiration of the author, and a burning desire for his acquaintance. He was very intimate with a young artist, then and now eminent, who at that time was illustrating one of Dickens' books, and was a near friend of the great author. Dickens and the young painter were on the eve of a trip to Paris, and the artist took advantage of this arrangement to endeavor to carry out Flatow's cherished desire. Said he, "Dickens and I will be at Meurice's Hotel at a certain time. Go over to Paris, put up at Meurice's, and I will introduce you."

No sooner said than done. Flatow returned, and called on me.

"Well," said I, "how do you like Dickens?"

"Like Dickens?" said Flatow, with affected surprise. "What is there to like about him? I ain't going to bow down to him—a stuck-up humbug! He thinks a lot of himself and his cleverness because he wrote 'Pickwick,' and such like. Why, he couldn't help writing 'em. He deserves no credit for that. He a clever man! Let him just go and sell a lot of pictures to a man that don't want 'em, as I have done lots of times; that's what I call being a clever man."

This was strange, but the interpretation thereof simple, when it was discovered that the good-natured young painter failed in persuading Dickens to be introduced to a gentleman whose appearance and *table-d'hôte* manners were far from conciliatory. To those who could endure a certain amount of rough vulgarity, Flatow was a very amusing person. He was a good mimic, and he managed to ingratiate himself with people greatly his superiors. Fechter was a great friend of his, and when some one applied to that actor's representation of Hamlet—which varied altogether from the recognized reading of the character—the well-known remark of the Russian on the unfortunate light-cavalry charge in the Crimea, "*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre,*" "I believe you, sir," said Flatow, "it is just magnificent."

On shaking hands with his gloves on he would say, "Excuse my glove, sir; it is the honester skin of the two." And he has told me more than once that on parting with a client after a heavy picture-transaction, and dismissing him, still gloved, with his favorite remark, he fancied the gentleman believed him. "But he was wrong, sir. I lost by nearly every one of 'em." So long as an artist worked conscientiously and successfully for him he was full of praise; and, what was better, carried out his engagements to the letter, and sometimes beyond it; but if he found he had made a mistake, and the painter had what he called "gone to weeds," he would dispute the quality of the goods, and leave the painter to his legal remedy. "He call hisself an artist!" I heard him say of a friend of my own; "he is only fit to be a fogey-trapper." This being the Flatow vernacular for photographer.

Flatow's business became very large, and his profits, I believe, proportionate. I had many transactions with him, though never of the importance of the "Railway Station," by which he is said to have made thirty thousand pounds. I cannot, and do not, vouch for the truth of this; but as he died worth eighty thousand pounds, he may be credited with having made a large profit out of my work. Like many of his tribe, he was fond of gems of all kinds—which he called "jools"—and fonder still of displaying them on his own person. He would sometimes offer bracelets and rings for pictures or sketches, but at values which were found to be much overrated. I was satisfied with one transaction of that nature; other artists were not so fortunate.

Flatow was scarcely middle-aged when severe illness struck him down. His sufferings were fearful. He had taken a large house in Porchester Terrace, made up his mind to take business more easily, and enjoy what he said he had "stacked away;" but he became so rapidly worse as to leave all hope behind. He had no family, his sole attendants being his wife and one of our old models, named Wall—from whom I had intelligence of his last days. The poor fellow's temper became dreadful, and he attacked his doctors furiously. On a certain occasion one of the most eminent physicians in London had prescribed some remedy from which the patient thought he had not only derived no benefit, but had been made actually worse. In answer to Flatow's inquiry if the medicine was to be repeated, the physician said, in broad Scotch, "Yes, ye'll just take the draught and the pills again to-night." Flatow's reply was: "You infernal Scotch, lanky brute! I only wish I had strength enough to reach you. I'd make you spin down-stairs a precious sight quicker than you came up. If ever you show your ugly face here again I will spoil it for you."

It is scarcely necessary to say that the face disappeared, never to return.

One touch more and I finish the portrait of Mr. Flatow. The sun was shining brightly on an early summer's morning, when Flatow said to his attendant, in a voice scarcely audible, "Wall, my boy, just wheel me to the window. Put me where I can see down the Terrace. There, that will do. Don't push a fellow about as if you were dealing with a sack of coals. See that fellow there, that mechanic chap with his tools on his back going to work? I'd give all I possess, and more if I had it, to change places with him. There, move me back, and just take care how you do it, and pull down the blind."

A few days' more suffering and the end came.

CHAPTER XLII.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

I MUST now return to my own doings, when a strange adventure befell me. I had just put down palette and brushes, at the close of a long day's work, when a visitor was announced.

"A lady, sir; she wouldn't give her name. She has come in a beautiful carriage and pair, sir—coachman and footman. She says you will know her."

In my drawing-room I found a tall, handsome woman, approaching middle age, dressed in black. When I entered the room she was attentively studying the engraving of my picture of "Claude Duval." She turned, and I saw a face that was entirely strange to me.

"Don't you remember me? I sat to you for that picture many years ago."

I pleaded my infirmity in remembering faces.

"Ah! I have changed, no doubt; but I thought you would remember me. Can we go into your painting-room? I want to see it again, and I have also a proposal to make."

"By all means," said I, and I attempted to lead the way.

"Oh, I know my way," said my visitor, and when in the passage she turned to go to the old studio, now a billiard-room.

"No," said I, "since you were here I have built another painting-room at the top of the house."

We went up-stairs, and when in the new studio the lady turned to me and said, rather abruptly,

"I want you to paint my portrait. Now look well at me. Don't you remember me? I sat to you many times."

Not for the life of me—the face was perfectly strange.

"I married soon after I saw you last," said she, "and I have one daughter; she is to be married in the autumn.

I want you to paint my likeness, to be presented to her as a wedding-present, but"—in a low voice, and with an air more mysterious, I thought, than the occasion warranted—"it must be a dead secret; my husband must not know of it for the world, nor my daughter, of course. When can I sit?"

"I shall be very happy to do what you wish. In a fortnight's time I shall be at leisure, and you can sit when you please after then."

"In a fortnight, then, I will be here."

After my visitor left me I puzzled myself trying to remember her. Strange if I had painted the face that I could recall no trace of it. The model for the two principal figures in the "Claude Duval" I remembered perfectly, and she was certainly not the lady who had just left me. I referred to my diary, and I found that a Miss K—— had sat to me for some chalk-studies of the principal figure. Could she be this lady?

A fortnight passed, and punctually to the time fixed my model came. She was very handsome, but with a face so melancholy as to defy all my attempts to give a cheerful expression to the picture.

"I am very unhappy at home," she said; "thwarted in everything I desire. I sometimes think there is a conspiracy to distress me."

To this I made some commonplace reply. I found my sitter quite impervious to all my endeavors to remove the gloom that oppressed her. The sad expression was not without its charm, and I felt I had no choice but to adopt it.

"May I ask what your name was when you sat for me?" said I.

"K——, Miss K——," was the reply.

Any doubt that was possible was dispelled; there could be no question about our having met before, but under what different circumstances! Miss K—— was certainly an ordinary artist's model, and on further inquiry I found that she acknowledged to having sat for several friends of mine, whose names she mentioned.

The sittings progressed with results more or less favorable, the gloom occasionally deepened, alternating with flashes of strange excitement when my sitter spoke of some slight that had been passed upon her, which, when explained, never seemed to justify her agitation.

"If my husband knew of this, though it is not to please myself, he would very likely oppose it, just because I desire to please my daughter. It is my affair; he has nothing to do with it. I hope you understand it is my affair; I pay for it myself."

I confess I felt that I was scarcely justified in lending myself to a secret treaty of this kind. I ought, perhaps, to have refused to paint the portrait at all, without the knowledge of the lady's husband; but it was far advanced before the above conversation took place, and all artists know that portraits intended for presents are often produced under secret conditions.

The work progressed till two sittings were all that were required to complete it. An appointment was made, and a letter came from my sitter in reply, telling me that she had left town on a visit to a friend who had kindly offered to bring her to the next sitting. Punctually to time as ever, the lady came; as she was shown into my room my servant said:

"The gentleman will be glad to know at what time he is to call for Mrs. Y——."

I named an hour, and proceeded with my work.

"You don't seem well," I said; "I hope you are not suffering."

"Suffering! I should think I am suffering. Who would not suffer if they had to bear— But there, it's of no use saying any more about it. Try to get through your work a little sooner to-day, if you can."

"Of course, if you wish it," said I; "but you forget that an hour is fixed for your friend to fetch you."

"No, I don't forget; I can't forget anything. I have something to do; I must go soon. Yes, indeed; but I will be back in time enough to meet the doctor."

"Oh, your friend is a doctor! Is he your regular medical man?"

"Yes—no. I am very well; I don't want a medical man."

"A friend only?" asked I.

Then after a pause my sitter said:

"That is all. Can I go now?"

"In a few minutes," I replied.

The lady trembled with excitement as she hastily assumed her cloak and hat. I rang the bell for the servant, who met me, and I accompanied my sitter down-stairs.

"The lady is not going, is she, sir?"

"Yes, the lady is going!" said my sitter in a sharp voice, and almost before I could look round she was out of the house.

"Oh dear," said the girl, "I am so sorry! I forgot to tell you that the gentleman who came with the lady this morning said she was on no account to be allowed to go till he came for her. I quite forgot to tell you."

"And if you had told me," said I, "I couldn't stop the lady if she desired to leave."

The front-door bell rang soon afterwards.

"I do believe that is the gentleman," said the servant.

"If so he has come much before his time," said I, as I went back to my studio.

"It is the gentleman, sir; and he is in such a way! He wants to see you."

"Where is he?"

"He is walking backwards and forwards in the drawing-room."

To the drawing-room I went, and was met by an elderly man in such a state of excitement that, after making an ineffectual effort to speak, he threw himself into a chair and stared at me with a look of horror.

"How could you let her go? I told your servant she was on no account to stir till I fetched her. I knew this would be a risk; I told her husband so. She ought not to have come."

"Really, sir," said I, "I don't understand you." My servant forgot to give your message to me; and if she had delivered it, I had no power to stop Mrs. Y—— when she wished to go."

"Sir, she is a lunatic, and in my charge. I am responsible for her safe custody. What is to be done now?"

"Mrs. Y—— assured me she would come back at the time fixed," said I, when I had recovered composure.

"Come back! She won't come back; I know that well enough! However, there is nothing for it but to wait and see. Is it possible that you have seen no sign of madness?"

"None whatever," said I.

I passed a very uncomfortable quarter of an hour with the doctor, who resumed his walk up and down the drawing-room. The appointed hour passed, and no Mrs. Y——.

"I told you so," said the doctor. "She may have gone home. Would you let your servant call a cab? and will you go with me to the house? The poor husband is away. The house is not far off."

To the house we went. A footman opened the door to us.

"Mrs. Y—— here?"

"No, sir."

"Not been—eh?"

"No, sir."

"Well, Mr. Frith," said the doctor, "I needn't take up any more of your time. I can't blame you; it's very unfortunate. I shall go home after I have consulted with the most likely people to find her. God knows what I am to say to her husband! Yes, I will let you know when we hear of her."

We shook hands and parted. In a few days I heard from the doctor that the poor woman was found wandering aimlessly about the streets long after midnight, not far from her own home.

Mr. Y—— came to see the portrait; and, though he seemed to think that it should not have been undertaken without his knowledge, in which he was possibly right, he paid for it, and behaved in all respects in a gentlemanly spirit.

I have since heard that my sitter's case is incurable. Her daughter is married, and the unfortunate husband's home is broken up. I leave experts in these dreadful cases to explain the concealment of aberration of mind, which must have existed during the many hours the poor lady sat to me. It is, of course, possible that the latent disease only showed itself in such force as to necessitate restraint at the latter part of the time required for my work; but it is strange to me that, beyond an excited manner, to be accounted for by other causes, I never discovered anything exceptional in the poor lady's conduct.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MEN-SERVANTS.

I THINK if I were ever so rich I should as much as possible avoid men-servants; not that I have a word to say against a highly respectable portion of the community, but being, like the Vicar of Wakefield, an admirer of *happy* faces, I am also an admirer of *pretty* ones, only they must be of the female order. Those who were so fortunate as to be guests at the hospitable house of the late John Penn, of engineering fame, may remember that, however extensive might be the dinner, and however large the number of diners, the whole service was conducted by women, dressed alike, and resembling each other also in another and pleasanter form, for they were good-looking without an exception. As I have elsewhere shown, I have been able to secure the services of some of my servants as models—a practice I don't recommend, because it is apt to "turn their heads" a little, and to make them careless over less agreeable duties.

In the whole course of my life I have employed only three male servants. With the first I had a very good character, which I found, on trial, was well deserved. He was a good-looking, active young fellow, and would have been altogether satisfactory but for two failings—one being a determination to make as much noise as possible during every operation he was called upon to perform. He succeeded in getting the greatest amount of noise possible out of a door in opening or shutting it; he banged the plates and dishes on the table, rattled the knives and forks, and broke more crockery than the most destructive of our servants had ever done before his coming. His second failing was a total defiance of the prescribed hour for his return when he had his "Sunday out." He was informed that eleven o'clock must never be passed before his return, and he so frequently preferred twelve, and sometimes half-past twelve, that I was constrained to inform him—after about his tenth infringement of our rule—that the next time he committed himself would be the last. For a short time my warning was effectual; but the fateful Sunday night came at last. At midnight my man had not returned, and it was nearer one than twelve o'clock when he made his appearance.

"Now, West," said I, "do you know what time it is?"

"Yes; I'm afraid I am rather late, sir. The fact is, me and—"

"I don't want to hear of your doings; you know I told you that the next time you committed yourself you would be discharged, and I now give you notice that—"

"I beg your pardon, sir—you may not be aware of it, but no gentleman can give notice of a Sunday night."

"I know that," said I, "and if you had returned home on Sunday night, I might have excused you; but, you see, it is Monday morning."

So Mr. West and I parted company. West figures in the "Railway Station" picture, disguised as a porter, who is informing an old lady that she must take a dog-ticket for a pet she is endeavoring to smuggle into the train.

West's situation was almost immediately filled by a man of very imposing presence, who had passed middle life. He came to us from a nobleman whom he had served as butler, and from whom we received a character satisfactory in all respects. He was honest, sober, attentive, and the rest of it, and his name was Johnson. If West had been noisy, Johnson was his exact opposite; indeed, so silent and stealthy, so to speak, were his movements, that it was necessary to be guarded in speaking of matters not intended for kitchen discussion, for Johnson was upon us at times with a ghostlike suddenness. My friends told me that, as he stood behind my chair at dinner, the contrast between servant and master was very unfavorable to the latter. "What a refined character there is in the head of your butler! he looks like an archbishop," said an artist friend; "I wonder you don't paint him!" No one ever called West a butler; and no one called Johnson anything else.

That my new man had a taste for the fine arts might be assumed, if the fact of his long and solemn contemplation of the "Railway Station" picture was a proof; for whenever he had occasion to visit the painting-room he would stare first at the picture and then at me, seeming by his expression to have a difficulty in determining which he admired the more.

The awe with which he inspired my children soon wore off. They were small and noisy, as is the habit with such little people; and after enduring a very demonstrative ebullition of juvenile spirits at the midday dinner on one occasion, the rioters were silenced by a solemn exclamation from Johnson of "Quietoode, children — quietoode!" This startled the children into quietness for a moment, to be changed into more noise than ever. Johnson then repeated his admonition. This was strange conduct on the part of a servant; the man had always been most respectful.

"Did you notice Johnson's walk as he left the room?" said my wife. "Do you think he drinks?"

"Good gracious, no!" said I. "He seems the pink of propriety; still his manner is strange."

As the day wore on Johnson's conduct became more eccentric. He was told to put some coals on the drawing-room fire.

"I positively decline to do so, sir."

"What!" said I; "you decline to—"

"Sir," interrupted Johnson, "I shall always be happy to obey all reasonable orders. If the fire wanted coals I would willingly supply the want; but such is not the case —not the case! No, sir, not the case!" and the butler left the room, taking the coal-scuttle with him.

"Why, what on earth has come to the man?" said I. "His conduct is only to be explained according to your theory; or else he is going off his head."

Johnson waited at our late dinner in his usual solemn manner, without a trace of any exceptional condition; but later in the evening, when it became Johnson's duty to fill the teapot with boiling water, he poured the water past the teapot, and was within an ace of scalding a child, who made a rapid escape from the butler's neighborhood.

"Take care what you are about. You very nearly scalded that boy."

"That boy, sir, is always in the way. I never, in the whole course of my life, saw such a boy."

"Johnson," said I, "you are exceedingly disrespectful, and if you—"

"I disrespectful!" said the man, in accents of intense astonishment. "I have lived in the highest of families, and have always been treated with great respect. I little thought, sir, that I should be accused of that."

"Now," said my wife, "I hope you are satisfied that there is something very wrong about that man, and I hope you will get rid of him as soon as possible."

"Wait," said I, "we shall soon have further justification for sending him about his business, unless I am much mistaken."

I was sitting reading in my dining-room that same evening — somewhat absorbed in a novel by my old friend Wilkie Collins — when I was startled by a voice behind me. I turned and beheld Johnson, who said:

"You ought to go down on your bended knees every night of your life, and thank 'eaven which have blessed you with the extronary talents as has given you the power of prodoocing them pictures. Yes; there's the "Railway Station" with all them people. Why, it's wonderful! I really can't think 'ow it's all done. Oh, I don't think you are 'alf thankful enough, and it's my dooty to tell you."

"Have you quite finished?" said I.

"Finished?" hiccoughed my respectable butler — "finished what? What are you a-talking about, I should like to know? And permit me to take the present occasion to inform you"—here he paused, and attempted to fix me with a glassy eye—"that you have got a pack of noisy, impident children as deserves a precious good 'iding. I know I shall be 'itting some of 'em some day."

"Leave the room instantly!" said I. "You are drunk."

I never saw surprise more vividly expressed by a human face.

"*He says I'm* DRUNK! Me, James Johnson, which has 'ad the best of character from—" Then savagely, "This 'ere's actionable." Then in bantering tones, "The next thing as you'll say is that I've bin and made away with your bit of plate. Ah, do! There you go. Send for the detectives as you've done in the picture. Have me took up and put in the picture. Why not, I should like to know?"

"Will you, or will you not, leave this room?"

"Don't be in a hurry. Wait a bit. Is that water as you've got there? Ah, it is." Then seizing a tumbler and the water-bottle, he succeeded in spilling some water into the tumbler, and much more on to the carpet, and then said, "I'm that thirsty; I think it must be that salt-beef."

"To-morrow morning," said I, "you will perhaps be sober enough to receive a notice to leave my service at once. Till then, I insist on your going to bed."

"I'm a-going, I'm a-going; and mind before you lays your head on to your pillow you take my advice, and thank 'eaven which has—"

Here Mr. Johnson, assisted by a push from me, staggered through the door, and went blundering down the passage to bed.

The subsequent career of my dignified butler is soon related. After making a futile attempt to get a character from me for "honesty, sobriety, etc.," he gave up the idea of returning to domestic service, and acquired, in some way or other, an invalid Bath-chair, in which he induced several people in delicate health to trust themselves. I have frequently met him with his invalid charges. He invariably stopped and pointed me out to his passenger, no doubt informing him or her, as the case might be, how little gratitude I felt for the talent which "'eaven had bestowed upon me."

His last feat was to drag an old lady into the middle of Hyde Park, leave her there, while he went to a public-house, got drunk, and forgot all about her. The invalid waited patiently for some time, at last got thoroughly frightened, and screamed till a policeman went to the rescue and dragged the sick woman to her home. What became of the Bath-chair, this deponent knoweth not.

Of my last experience of the male domestic I have nothing but what is pleasant to say. Farrer—my third's name—was a steady young fellow, and a most excellent servant. He left me to "better himself," in which I hope he succeeded. With him I bid adieu forever and a day to men-servants.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"THE PRIVATE VIEW."

Seven years ago certain ladies delighted to display themselves at public gatherings in what are called æsthetic dresses; in some cases the costumes were pretty enough, in others they seemed to rival each other in ugliness of form and oddity of color. There were — and still are, I believe — preachers of æstheticism in dress; but I think, and hope, that the preaching is much less effective than it used to be. The contrast between the really beautiful costumes of some of the lady *habituées* of our private view and the eccentric garments of others, together with the opportunity offered for portraits of eminent persons, suggested a subject for a picture, and I hastened to avail myself of it. Beyond the desire of recording for posterity the æsthetic craze as regards dress, I wished to hit the folly of listening to self-elected critics in matters of taste, whether in dress or art. I therefore planned a group, consisting of a well-known apostle of the beautiful, with a herd of eager worshippers surrounding him. He is supposed to be explaining his theories to willing ears, taking some picture on the Academy walls for his text. A group of well-known artists are watching the scene. On the left of the composition is a family of pure æsthetes absorbed in affected study of the pictures. Near them stands Anthony Trollope, whose homely figure affords a striking contrast to the eccentric forms near him. The rest of the composition is made up of celebrities of all kinds, statesmen, poets, judges, philosophers, musicians, painters, actors, and others. Miss Braddon — close to her Sir Julius Benedict — is talking to a friend. Mr. Gladstone shakes hands with Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Bright standing by. Mr. Browning talks to an æsthetic lady, whose draped back affords a chance of showing that view of the costume. Sir F. Leighton is in earnest conversation with Lady Lonsdale, who sits on one of the ottomans in the gallery not far from Lady Diana Huddleston, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, and others. Professor Huxley is prominent, as are also the Archbishop of York, Lord Coleridge, and Mrs. Langtry, Mr. Agnew (then M.P.), Baron Huddleston — by the latter stand Messrs. Tenniel and Du Maurier—and many others; among whom I must not forget Miss Ellen Terry and my old friends Irving and Sala. I received the kindest assistance from all these eminent persons, many of whom came to me at great sacrifice of time and engagements. Mr. Gladstone was one of the first to come, but his first sitting was cruelly short, as he was obliged to attend another appointment. How agreeable he can make himself goes without saying. Wishing to catch an animated expression, I kept him in conversation, and in the course of it I made a somewhat trite remark upon the rarity of the numberless witticisms ascribed to different humorists having been actually heard at their inception, most of them I thought, and still think, being after-thoughts generated in seclusion. As an instance to the contrary, however, Mr. Gladstone told me the following:

Sir Francis Burdett began his public life as a pronounced *patriot*, and suffered, as is well known, by imprisonment in the Tower for proceedings arising out of his too demonstrative patriotism. In after-life, however, the patriot changed into something so opposed to his former inclining, as to betray him, during a furious harangue in Parliament, into expressions that were scarcely parliamentary; for in condemning a measure that was before the House of too radical a kind, which had received the warm support of a member noted for his ultra-liberal principles, Sir Francis concluded his speech by exclaiming that "of all the *cants* in the world, the *cant* of *patriotism* was the most intolerable, not to say *disgusting*." Lord John Russell rose to reply, and after doing his best to traverse the argument of Sir F. Burdett, concluded his speech in the following words: "There is one thing, however, in which I entirely agree with the honorable gentleman. I think, with him, that the cant of patriotism is intolerable, and even, to use his own expression, disgusting; but I venture to say that there is something even more intolerable and more disgusting, and that is the REcant of patriotism."

In support of Mr. Gladstone's theory I gave him the following instance of ready wit. I forget in what year it was that I exhibited a picture that obtained a large share of popular approval. It was shown at the Royal Academy, and on the private-view day I met Mr. Bernal Osborne, who, a day or two before, had convulsed the House of Commons by one of his witty and brilliant speeches. He complimented me very much on my picture, and I very sincerely returned his compliments, with interest, on his speech.

"I will tell you what," said he, "I will exchange my tongue for your *palette*."

If this be original, and I have no reason to doubt it, the reply was so good as to excuse my repeating so palpable a compliment to myself. Exceptions, however, prove the rule, and the instances are indeed rare of witty sayings being heard by myself at their birth.

Another example to the contrary from a man I knew intimately, who was celebrated for his brilliant conversational powers—namely, the late Shirley Brooks—may be mentioned here.

In the course of a conversation on poets and poetry the merits of a gentleman, whose writings display a warmth which many of his readers think hails from a place unmentionable to ears polite, were nearly as warmly discussed.

"Not a poet at all?" said one admirer, in reply to an audacious unbeliever; "why, the man was born a poet! and if ever man proved the truth of the adage, '*Poeta nascitur, non fit*,' X—— is that man."

"So he is," said Brooks; "he is a poet of nastiness not fit for publication." Surely a witty play upon the Latin words.

One more example is, I think, all I can remember.

Among our friends was a young gentleman who rejoiced in a nose so "tip-tilted"—to use Tennyson's phrase—as to be very remarkable indeed for that peculiarity. He received numerous quips about his unfortunate feature, and accepted them with good-humor, except on one occasion, when he said, gravely:

"I say, look here; I object to your making my nose a subject of conversation."

"That is unfortunate," replied his friend; "we wanted a subject, and we took the first that *turned up*."

To return to "The Private View."

While painting this picture I was not a great employer of the "artist's model," except for some of the æsthetes, the principal one being a portrait of a young person named Jenny Trip. Miss Trip was a trial to me. Never did she "come to her time." Her conversational powers were *nil*. Nothing that I could say seemed to interest her in the slightest degree, and, unless I spoke, silence reigned. She had a pretty, pensive face, on which a smile seemed as much out of place as it would be on the face of a mute at a funeral. This most provoking smile was more especially irritating when it was the only reply to a terrific scolding.

"What is your father?" said I to her one day, when she came into my studio two hours late.

"He is a stoker on the Chatham and Dover line."

"How early does he get to his work?"

"He goes out at five in the morning."

"Indeed," said I; "and his daughter—that is you—cannot get to your work by ten. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Not a word of excuse. She smiled. I made a mental vow that, once the æsthete was finished, my acquaintance with Miss Trip should finish too. That happy moment came at last; there was but little to do, and for that little my smiling friend was not absolutely necessary.

"As you find it impossible to get here by ten, perhaps you can come at two to-morrow?"

She said she could, and smiled.

"Now observe, Miss Trip," said I, "if you are not punctual to-morrow you will be sent away."

She smiled again, and departed.

I then told my servant that unless the young lady was within a quarter of an hour of the time fixed, she was not to be admitted.

I allowed two o'clock to pass, and at three, my servant happening to come into my room, I asked after Miss Jenny Trip.

"She has just been, and gone again, sir."

"What did she say when you told her you had orders to send her away because she was after her time?"

"She didn't say anything, sir; she only smiled."

My sole contribution to the Exhibition of 1882 was a portrait of Miss Emily Levy, an old and valued friend. With that exception, and another in the form of a portrait of Mrs. Lee, a great part of the year 1881, and nearly the whole of 1882, was spent on the picture of "The Private View."

In the course of a summer holiday spent in Switzerland in 1882, a little subject was suggested by the mode adopted for carrying ladies up the mountains. The fair traveller sits in a wooden chair, which is supported on two long poles, and carried by relays of porters, one at each end. This method of locomotion is apt to remind one of the 5th of November; but I thought that a pretty bride, with a manly bridegroom, to say nothing of the picturesque porters and the still more picturesque surroundings, might produce a pleasing subject; and there were the advantages in it, very valuable in my eyes, of its being a subject of modern life. This picture, with Mrs. Lee's portrait and "The Private View," formed my contributions to the Exhibition of 1883. Pictures composed of groups of well-known people are always very popular at the Academy, and "The Private View" was no exception to that rule, a guard being again found necessary to control the crowds of visitors. I may perhaps be pardoned for recording the fact of this picture being the sixth painted by me that has received this special compliment.

CHAPTER XLV.

DR. DORAN.

When I assert that story-telling is a difficult art, I only repeat a truism. A man may be what is commonly called "full of anecdote," but he may also be, from various causes, quite unable to tell a story properly. He may be of a nervous temperament, and forget the point of his anecdote before he has got half-way through it, and his audience may decline to be interested—interrupt him by conversation with one another—and at last leave him high and dry without a listener. Or a disturbing feeling may come over him that he has told the same anecdote to the same people before. These and other interruptions so often affect the *raconteur* as to paralyze him, and cause many a good story to fall stillborn upon his audience. But of all story-tellers, save me from the man who, with loud and persistent voice, takes the company by the throat, and, like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," compels them to listen to a long tirade, dull and pointless, and to his own screeching laugh at the end of it. No good *raconteur* ever laughs at his own funny anecdotes. Why should he? He has surely often heard them before, and if he who roars at his own wit, or at the absence of it, knew how much the fun of a story is increased by the relater being apparently unconscious of there being anything to laugh at, he would acquire such a command over his risible muscles as should enable him to relate the most side-splitting matter without a smile. The great comic actors well know the truth of this. Liston—one of the greatest I ever saw—was never known to smile upon the stage. His long, solemn face might have become the pulpit as he surveyed his audience after convulsing them with a display of his refined and exquisite humor. He whose name heads this chapter was not only a good story-teller, but he was, as my readers may know, an admirable writer. An Irishman by birth, he possessed much of Irish fun and humor. He was unceasingly industrious, producing a vast amount of literary work, always entertaining and instructive. Before he was twenty years old, John Doran, afterwards known to his friends and the world as Dr. Doran, was a successful contributor to various periodicals. Being entirely dependent on his own exertions, he found that some more efficient means of support must be secured than those offered by small literary successes; he, therefore, eagerly accepted the post of private tutor in the family of Lord Glenlyon, afterwards Duke of Athole. For several years after the completion of the education of Lord Glenlyon, Doran was similarly employed in the family of Mr. Lascelles, afterwards Earl of Harewood. From that happy home he transferred himself to Blandford, in Dorsetshire, where for a short time he had the charge of Lord Portman's sons. Overwork produced temporary illness, and, yielding to advice, Doran went abroad, and spent the following two or three years on the Continent.

It was during this holiday that our traveller took a doctor's degree—after passing a sharp examination—in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Marburg, thus acquiring the title by which he was always known. On his return to England in perfectly restored health—having not only been blessed in that without which all else is nothing, but with a young and pretty wife also—the doctor felt that the time had arrived when he must select a way of living, and resolutely persevere in it. An opportunity of church preferment was offered to him by his friend Lord Harewood, but respectfully declined, and literature, in a wide acceptation of the word, was fixed for his pursuit.

It is not my intention to follow my dear old friend through his early struggles and disappointments to his final successes. Dr. Doran was known everywhere as the author of many popular books when I first made his acquaintance. There was so much sympathy between us that our acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy, and intimacy into the warmest friendship. Doran had a great love of art, and, I think, a desire that I should paint a picture from some anecdote, historical or other, in one of his books. He proposed several to me, but they had the fault of all suggested by literary men, from Dickens downwards, that of needing the traditional balloon from the mouths of the figures to explain the action of the piece. I found one for myself, however, from the book in which Nell Gwynne figures as an orange-girl at the Duke's Theatre. She is represented offering her fruit to a boxful of gallants, and some of her impudent wit with it. I had the honor and pleasure of finding one of my old friend's books, "Mann and Manners at the Court of Florence," dedicated to me.

But it is with Doran socially that I now desire to deal. He was a delightful companion, as many a day's walk with him proved to me. His stories were inexhaustible, actors or singers often being the subjects. Doran had frequently witnessed Rachel's chief performances, and always spoke enthusiastically of her powers. Of that remarkable person he used to tell the following story.

According to Doran, Rachel began public life as a child street singer and reciter, and one day he—then a very young man—made one of a crowd on a certain boulevard in Paris, who stood listening to the wonderful child. A middle-aged woman was with the girl, her mother, evidently, from the easily traced resemblance between the two. The woman played some instrument in the way of accompaniment to the child's sweet voice, and when the performance was over the girl went among the crowd to collect their pence in a small, quaintly-shaped wooden pail which she carried for the purpose. Her dress was ragged, but clean, consisting of a short petticoat covered by a pelisse common to the time. Many years after this, Dr. Doran visited Paris, and found Rachel at the head of her profession, and a world's wonder. He made her acquaintance, and to his great delight received an invitation to a *réunion* at her house. "And what an assembly it was!" said Doran. "Your profession, dear boy, represented by the best painters in Paris—in short, some of the best of everything." Rachel was sumptuously attired, receiving her guests with the simplest grace—not a trace of the theatre.

Soon after the last arrival the great actress disappeared, to the surprise of her guests ; and their surprise was increased when a tall figure, unmistakably that of Rachel, dressed in a ragged petticoat and wearing an old-fashioned pelisse, attended by a shabby old woman with a guitar, appeared in their midst. A wondering circle was made quickly round the strange couple. A few notes upon the guitar by very feeble fingers, then, amid breathless silence, the tremendous scene from "Phèdre." "We had not recovered from the effects," said Doran, "when Rachel produced the little wooden pail I well remembered, and came smiling and begging among us. I think it was pretty well filled, when she held it high, saying '*Pour les pauvres;*' then she left us, and returned in a few minutes in her former dress."

Another story occurs to me. It goes without saying that Dr. Doran, being a sensible man, did not believe in table-rapping as a spiritual manifestation, and he had a supreme contempt for all such believers. Among his acquaintance, however, there were three gentlemen, great friends, who to various similarities of taste added a belief in spirits, fervent in all three. One of these gentlemen, who enjoyed feeble health (as Doran put it), was a collector of curios of all kinds—a few pictures, Louis Quatorze clocks and snuff-boxes, Venetian glass, oak cabinets, ancient armor, and the like. The virtuoso's health became worse and worse till he died, leaving his two spiritual friends executors. To soften as much as possible the grief of the survivors, the sick man assured them that though they would shortly see the last of his body, his spirit would be in constant communication with them, and they might depend on his putting in an appearance either through a table or some other medium, whenever they chose to call upon him. What an ordinary being would have considered of greater value was a substantial recognition of both his brother believers in his will. To one he left certain clocks and snuff-boxes, to the other some indifferent pictures and some oak-work and armor.

"With the ungrateful inconsistency common to human nature," Doran said, "he thought the armor man was disappointed that he didn't get a clock, and the snuff-box legatee that a suit of armor was not left to him." Be that as it may, there is no doubt that very soon after the property had been divided, he who had inherited the armor received a communication from the dead telling him to go at once to the other legatee and inform him that a certain snuff-box, set with small diamonds and containing a miniature of the Duchesse de la Vallière in the lid, was left to him by mistake, the devisor fully intending it for his other friend, to whom the possessor in error was desired to resign it.

This story was fully credited, and the command respectfully obeyed; so easily, indeed, that the "armor man" again summoned the dead, when, "from information received," it appeared another mistake had been made. Yet another and more valuable "object" was bequeathed in error.

"It is really strange, my dear friend," said he of the armor to him of the snuff-boxes. "I had a delightful communication from our benefactor and friend last night, and was again assured that a certain plaque had been left to you in error—it was intended for me."

"Did the spirit of our departed friend tell you that?" was the astonished inquiry.

"He did," was the reply.

"But the plaque was not left to me at all; Brown got that," said he of the snuff-boxes.

"Dear, dear!" said the armor man. "Then the spirit must have been the devil, and not our friend at all."

"Suppose it must," replied the other.

Doran was not only a good story-teller, but an appreciative listener to others. I cannot refrain from relating a somewhat personal incident that amused him, and may amuse my readers. Two of my children—a boy and a girl—when very small, but just old enough to be trusted alone in the streets, were wandering in Kensington Gardens Terrace, and as they walked slowly past the big houses they looked through the area railings into the kitchens, and speculated upon the objects on the various spits. Presently they came to a joint that puzzled them.

One said it was mutton, the other averred with much persistence that it was beef. "You are both wrong," said the voice of the owner of the house from the dining-room window; "it is pork."

With the publication of the two following letters, I close my recollections of Dr. Doran. My remembrance of his kindness to me on all occasions, my respect for his talents, and my love for the man will abide with me so long as "memory holds her seat."

The first letter relates to a little party given to celebrate the marriage of my second daughter:

"ATHENÆUM OFFICE,
"20 WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.,
"12*th August*, 1869.

"DEAR MRS. FRITH,—While I am sitting here waiting for proofs—but now I think of it, I am not sitting *here*, but at the printing-office in Tooke's Court, just in front of a sponging-house; however, while I am waiting for proofs, my thoughts go back to the charming scene which your hospitable house presented on Tuesday night. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on its perfect success. That it was thoroughly successful in good taste and all the means and appliances for enjoyment, was the joyous opinion of every one with whom I came in contact. For my part, when I think of those incomparable bridesmaids, I feel that the world is not so well ordered as it might be, and that it is a pity we can't be always young and in love forever, living also rent-free, including queen's taxes!

"May the lives of the two young people, for whose sake all that youth, beauty, and friendship were assembled within that Arabian Nights sort of tent, be as happy as could be desired by those who are nearest and dearest to them both! May I add that you may as well let the tent stand and keep the lights ready? for sisters follow sisters, and the inevitable man and the hour *will* come.

"Do not think of troubling yourself to answer this. I send it in place of the silent courtesy of a card, and in acknowledgment of one of the most brilliant and enjoyable of evenings. With best regards to Mr. Frith,

"I am, dear Mrs. Frith, very sincerely yours,
"J. DORAN."

"33 LANSDOWNE ROAD, W., 8*th July*, 1870.

"DEAR MRS. FRITH,—

"'Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand!'

is what Romeo said when he wanted Juliet's *number*.

"I have been mentally standing below your conservatory looking up towards your imaginary figure, and saying the same words for the same purpose.

"As Romeo afterwards says,

"'Oh, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?'

I conclude Juliet would not give her *number;* and I may go on metaphorically gazing up at you in the conservatory with the same result. So I must ask you to let me acquit myself of my lost bet by substituting the enclosed in place of the fairly forfeited pair of gloves, and to believe me, dear Mrs. Frith,

Very sincerely yours,

"J. DORAN."

CHAPTER XLVI.

MY LATER PROFESSIONAL WORK.

Revisiting the scenes of one's youth is always a melancholy pleasure, and often no pleasure at all, but much the reverse. In my vacation-time of 1884 I visited Harrogate. I experienced the "melancholy pleasure" in the fullest sense, for I found that all the friends I knew long ago had joined the majority. My father's hotel, the Dragon, instead of being, as I remember it, filled with health and pleasure seekers, gay with all the gayety of a fashionable watering-place, was deserted by all but a care-taker, closed as an inn, windows broken, and desolate. I was allowed to go over it, in the charge of a slipshod girl. I revisited the little room in which my supposed genius first saw the light. It was unaltered, though more than half a century had passed since I made the terrible drawing of a dog that astonished the world—of Harrogate. On several of the window-panes, at the back of the house, were names of visitors, diamond-scratched, and dated a century and more ago. There were my own and my brothers', in childish writing. The ballroom—a large and really splendid room when in its right mind—was in the last stage of decay, the walls mouldy, and the floor in holes. And what lovely forms have I not seen quadrilling, waltzing, and minuetting on these boards, now so rotten! The mystery of the house being allowed to totter on its poor last legs in this melancholy fashion will soon be solved by time, a solution imminent in cracked ceilings and partially fallen roof. I turned away from "the home of my childhood" a sadder if not a wiser man.

As I approach the present time I feel more and more reluctant to speak of myself and my doings. I am thoroughly tired of the first person singular, and shall content myself by noting very shortly my professional work of the last few years. The success of "Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Siddons," a capital subject, taken from a passage in Campbell's life of the great actress, was, however, unquestionable.

Nollekens' bust of Johnson, together with Reynolds' portraits of the great writer, supplied me with sufficient authority for his likeness, while that of Mrs. Siddons was as easily derived from Gainsborough and others. This picture was a favorite with those people whose opinion is most worthy of consideration—that of my brother artists. I had often felt a desire to paint a "Statute Fair," and after twice witnessing that held annually at Warwick, and making many studies and an elaborate sketch for it, and even commencing a large picture of the subject, bad times came and frightened me, and the picture was dropped—never to be taken up again, I fear. Then my evil destiny tempted me into the domain of history, and nothing would satisfy me but I must try my hand at Cromwell contemplating the dead body of Charles I. It is related that after that monarch's execution his body was taken into a gallery at Whitehall, and watched there all night by two of his friends. Those gentlemen were sitting over the fire in the dead of night, when a footstep was heard approaching the room. The door opened, and a man entered muffled in a cloak. He approached the body, contemplated it for some minutes, and then, muttering the words "Cruel necessity," left as silently as he had entered, but not before he had been recognized as Cromwell.

I have to acknowledge, then, that my contributions to the Royal Academy show of 1884 were of very scant attraction, "Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Siddons" being the only one that, coming as it did within the scope of my powers, proved successful. Again I plunged into history, and planned a large composition from an incident in the life of John Knox. It may be remembered that one of my earlier pictures represented "Knox Reproving Queen Mary." My present venture showed that zealot reproving the ladies of her court for amusing themselves by playing at a harmless game. Knox had just left the queen in a passion of tears, caused by his brutal attacks, and in passing through an antechamber — still in existence — filled with courtiers, pages, and ladies, he was, or pretended to be, shocked into the use of his usual strong language at the sight of "Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm."

Many of the young students of the present day will perhaps be surprised to hear that it was my custom, and that of my friends, to make nude studies of all the figures in our pictures before we proceeded to clothe them; the advantage of the method being a safeguard, to a great extent, against disproportion and false action. I regret to say I have discontinued the practice, but the habit of making numbers of chalk-studies for the final oil-sketch is still *de rigueur* with me. In the Knox sketch I introduced the figure of a jester who stands by the preacher in a mocking attitude, as he turns to admonish the young revellers. The contrast of the color of the jester with the black figure of the preacher was very valuable. But as I worked, the idea crossed my mind that there was no record of a jester being at the court of the Queen of Scots, nor could I satisfy myself that the reign of Elizabeth was similarly distinguished; but if Henry VIII. had his Will Somers, why might not his niece of Scotland have her jester also? To what better authority could I turn than to Mr. Froude, whose works had given me so much instruction and pleasure, and from whom I had already gleaned one historic subject? I wrote to that distinguished person, and received a reply to the effect that jesters were never known north of the Tweed.

The result of this letter was the disappearance of the jester from the picture, a red chair taking his place; but I allowed him to remain in the first sketch, now in the possession of Mr. Flowers, of Stratford-on-Avon. Next to having a photograph of the scene of Darnley's murder, a drawing, taken on the morning after the explosion at Kirk o' Field, lent to me by Mr. Froude, was most awe-inspiring by its terrible fidelity. There lay Darnley as the murderers had left him, *strangled*, the body evidently undisturbed to enable the artist to do his work. The prince's page lay at a little distance; the fragments of Darnley's lodging forming the background, combined with hedges, and a fringe of frightened spectators. The original drawing was sent to England for Queen Elizabeth's inspection immediately after the murder of Darnley, and is now in the Record Office. That lent to me by Mr. Froude is an exact copy.

Though this drawing is not the work of an accomplished artist, it bears marks of authenticity and truth-telling, so far as the producer's powers enabled him to go; it is in water-colors, and it seems to me to dispose altogether of the theory of Darnley's being blown up by the gunpowder that destroyed the house, for the body is unmutilated and unblackened, neither of which conditions could it have escaped if the death had been caused by an explosive. The unfortunate prince had evidently heard the murderers at work in the room beneath his own; he then endeavored to escape, and was killed in the attempt.

Of course the study of the locality in which the scene selected for my picture occurred entailed the necessity of a journey to Holyrood. There I found the large anteroom in which the queen's Marys and their friends talked and worked, danced and trifled; and that terrible little inner chamber, now so "worn upon the edge of time," where the queen, sitting at supper with Rizzio, was startled by the white face of Ruthven, newly risen from his sick-bed, armed, though too weak to stand upright in armor, heading the furious band bent on the death of the Italian favorite. The room is little bigger than a cupboard; how easy to realize the struggle—the supper-table overthrown, the attendant lady screaming for assistance, the terrified musician clinging to his royal mistress, while he receives stab after stab from the daggers of his murderers! The body was dragged across the antechamber and left bleeding in a room beyond—blood-stains, or what pass for such, remaining on the floor to this day.

A story is told of a traveller for a firm—which dealt, among other things, in a composition famous for its power of removing stains of any sort from all kinds of materials —who, in the temporary absence of the then custodian of

Holyrood, applied his stain-remover to Rizzio's blood. He was discovered on his knees by the indignant guardian, vigorously rubbing the floor. His panacea failed—either from his being too soon disturbed in the application of it, or from the fact that the stain was too deep to be affected. The man was expelled from the palace, and Rizzio's blood still remains one of the most attractive sights for tourists.

My first acquaintance with this incident arose from a sketch which a young artist brought to me for my advice as to whether or not it was worthy of being made into a larger picture. The firm's traveller was depicted, as I have described him, scouring the floor, or rather interrupted in his work by an old lady, who—according to my artist friend—was many years ago in sole charge of Holyrood. She was represented in a great passion. I think I advised the artist to inquire further into the truth of the story before he gave it permanent form as a large picture.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A STRANGE PURCHASE.

If the "Bond Street lounger" of fifty years ago could revisit that street he would scarcely recognize the scene of his youth. I can well remember it, and I think I can safely assert that there was not a picture-shop in the whole length of it. Now they are to be counted by scores, to say nothing of the galleries that abound. As a rule, the magnates of the trade do not expose their treasures to the gaze of the passer-by; and in the exceptional instances when a shop is permitted to display a tolerable specimen of art in its window, there is sure to be a gallery behind, in which purchasers will often find works by the best masters of the English and foreign schools. A picture-dealer, whom I shall call Stokes, was a few years ago the proprietor of a large shop with a gallery at the rear of it. The period was August, the season was over, and business as well. Mr. Stokes was on the point of leaving town for his usual holiday, when a man entered the shop and asked if he could speak to Mr. Stokes.

"You can," was the reply. "I am Mr. Stokes. What can I do for you?"

Judging from the visitor's appearance, there seemed no chance of a revival of business by anything that could be done for him. He was palpably of the Jewish persuasion, and his dress had evidently been worn for years.

"You buy pictures?" said the Israelite, looking about him.

"Yes, I do, if they are the right sort."

"Well, now, if I was to put you up to a picture by Gainsborough, what would you stand?"

"A picture by Gainsborough?" said the dealer. "What sort of a picture?"

"Beautiful—size of life—lovely woman."

"And do you mean to say you have got such a picture?"

"No, I don't mean to say *I* have; but some friends of mine have, and I can put you up to it if you will make it worth my while."

"An original by Gainsborough," murmured Mr. Stokes; "a whole length of a lovely woman. Well, you can show it to me, and if I buy it I will give you five-and-twenty pounds."

"Done with you," said the man. "I have a cab at the door; jump in with me, and I'll take you to the picture."

"Why, where on earth are we going to?" exclaimed Mr. Stokes, as the cab entered the back slums of Seven Dials.

"It's all right, governor; we shall be there directly. You are all right. I'll pay the cab."

And almost as the man spoke the cab drew up at a small shop. The picture-dealer had time to notice that the establishment was one for the sale of imitation antique furniture and common *bric-à-brac* as he passed through the shop and followed his guide up some rickety stairs to a room above, where a strange sight awaited him. On a sideboard of exquisite workmanship masses of silver-plate and china were piled. It required but one glance of his experienced eye to recognize the originality of the antique silver and the value of the china. There were pieces of rare tapestry nailed tentatively against the wall, and, to crown all, a magnificent Gainsborough, which, as Stokes expressed it to me, "seemed to lighten up the whole place."

The first thought that passed into my friend's mind was that he had fallen among thieves, and that he must assure himself that the picture had been honestly come by before he could venture to make an offer for it. He must be cautious, also, not to display too much eagerness to possess it, or the price might be made prohibitive. At a table in the middle of the room sat an old man of repulsive aspect, with a long gray beard. Close to his hand was a catalogue.

"I conclude," said the old man, in a voice that at once betrayed his Jewish antecedents, "that I have the honor of speaking to the celebrated Mr. Stokes."

"I have come here at the request of this per—this gentleman to see a Gainsborough. Is that the picture?"

"*That* is the picture, and I need not tell so good a judge as Mr. Stokes that it is—"

"Well, allow me to ask where you got it, and all about it, before we talk about what you want for it, because you see—"

"I understand," interrupted the Jew in his turn; "you think we stole it — don't you now?" smiling as he made the remark. "And when I tell you there is a gang of five of us in it you will be sure we did—won't you now?"

"Not a bit of it," said Stokes; "but, as a prudent man, I must be careful that nobody can have a claim on whatever I buy after I have paid for it; and you must admit this is not exactly the locality in which one would expect to see a Gainsborough — if it is a Gainsborough — and, whether it is or not, times are so bad that, unless it can be had very reasonably, and a clean bill of health with it, I don't care about it."

"I don't blame you, sir; I don't blame you; far from it. If you will just look over this catalogue you will see for yourself — here you are — effects, plate, china, tapestry, furniture, horses, carriages, noble family, Buckinghamshire. There is some of the plate"—pointing to the sideboard—"tapestry and pictures; some more there in the corner, with their backs to you; not in your way, old family portraits; not good, any of 'em. I went to the castle myself; nobody there; things given away, sir—literally given away. And look here—here it is—I bought that splendid Gainsborough for six guineas!"

Mr. Stokes told me he could scarcely believe his eyes when he saw the confirmation of the man's story.

"What do you want for it?"

"Well," said the old gentleman, smiling, "I told you there were five of us in it, and we want thirty pounds apiece; five thirties is a hundred and fifty."

Now, said Stokes to himself, be not too eager; above all, do not go away without the picture.

"A hundred and fifty pounds seems a good deal; a goodish profit that for a six-pound investment. It's a big picture, and size is always against the selling of a thing. Well, I don't know, I suppose I must risk it; will you take my check?"

"Certainly," said the man.

"All right," said Stokes; "got pen and ink handy? But how," said Stokes, pausing, pen in hand, "am I to get it home? Seems a good deal of money. Could you get me a van, or a light cart, or something, so that I could see to it myself?"

"You shall have one at the door in ten minutes," was the reply.

"When I stood that Gainsborough up in the splendid light in my gallery, Mr. Frith (you know the picture), you may imagine how pleased I was. It was my dinner-time, and I treated myself to an extra glass of sherry to celebrate my purchase. Just as I had finished my dinner my man Smith came up to me and told me that Lord —— was in the gallery, and wanted to speak to me. Lord —— is an old customer of mine. Down I went, and found him absorbed in the Gainsborough.

"'A new purchase this, Mr. Stokes?'

"'Yes, my lord; it hasn't been in the place an hour.'

"'Gainsborough, of course,' said his lordship.

"'Yes, my lord, and one of the finest in England.'

"'Am I right in supposing the picture is for sale? if so, what is the price?'

"'A thousand guineas, my lord.'

"'I will take it; and will you have the frame regilt? and if you think a little cleaning or varnishing desirable, I know I can trust you to see to all that sort of thing. I leave town this evening. You will be so good as to let me know when the picture can be sent to Eaton Place.'"

Lord —— went to his country-house, where he was attacked by fever, and died in a few days. The frame of the Gainsborough was regilt, and the picture varnished, when so much additional splendor was developed as to cause Mr. Stokes many pangs of regret at its precipitate sale. Though Lord —— had died, his executors were, of course, responsible for the purchase of the picture, and Mr. Stokes was on the point of writing to offer them a release from the engagement when he received a letter informing him that Lord —— had made his purchase known to several persons before his death, and his executors fully acknowledged their liability; but they were instructed to express a hope that, under the circumstances, Mr. Stokes would not press the purchase upon them, in consideration of the many satisfactory business transactions that had passed between him and Lord —— in times past. To this letter Mr. Stokes replied by return of post. And, after expressing great (and I am sure real) regret at the untimely death of his patron, he hoped he was the last man in the world to insist on the fulfilment of a contract under such melancholy circumstances, etc. To this came a reply to the effect that Lord ——'s family fully appreciated Mr. Stokes's ready consent to their wishes, and the greatest compliment they could pay his conduct on this occasion was to describe it as worthy of Mr. Stokes.

"Now," said Mr. Stokes, "anybody who takes a fancy to my Gainsborough will not get it for a thousand guineas, nor anything like it."

The beautiful lady had displayed her charms in my friend's gallery but a few days when she was discovered by a well-known noble collector, a real lover of art, but a rough one.

"Hullo, Stokes! what have you got there?"

"I need not tell your grace; you know well enough."

"Gainsborough, ain't it? Not such a bad one. What have you the impudence to ask for it?"

"Three thousand guineas."

"Rubbish!"

"No, your grace, three thousand *guineas!*" (emphasis on guineas).

"I wish you may get it."

"So do I, your grace; and if I don't, I intend to keep the picture."

"Well, what's new? What else have you to show me?"

Though the picture-dealer produced several treasures for the duke's inspection, he found his noble patron gave them but a wandering attention, ever and anon casting longing eyes in the direction of the lovely Gainsborough. Stokes felt that the blow had struck deep, and that he must play a waiting game.

"Now you don't really suppose that there is a fool in the world big enough to pay such an unconscionable sum as that you ask for the Gainsborough—do you?"

"Perhaps not, but I am not fool enough to sell it for less."

"Suppose me such an idiot—only suppose, mind—as to offer you two thousand five hundred pounds for it, what then?"

"Why then, your grace, I should decline to take it."

"Hum—ah—let me see—did you get me that proof of 'Nelly O'Brien' that was sold the other day?"

"Yes, your grace; here it is, and a splendid impression indeed."

"So it is; much obl*ee*ged to you. Well, I must be off. Cold August, isn't it? Did you get the grouse I sent you? All right—no thanks. Fact is, we killed such a lot, didn't know who to send 'em to." The shop-door was now very near, when the duke said: "That infernal picture has fascinated me. I will give you three thousand pounds for it."

"No, your grace; you must excuse me. If you or any one else were to offer me three thousand one hundred and twenty pounds, I should refuse it. My price is three thousand guineas, and I will never take one farthing less."

"Well, of all the unconscionable—I know I am a fool —but—well—send her home!"

A few years ago the lovely Gainsborough was exhibited in the Winter Exhibition of Old Masters, at Burlington House, and greatly admired by numbers who would have been as much surprised as I was, if they could have heard this true story of a "Strange Purchase."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE CRAZY ARTIST.

From time immemorial famous artists have, on convenient occasions, given willing counsel to their younger and less-known brethren in the conduct of their pictures. Lawrence, Reynolds, West, and many others frequently devoted a morning hour to receive students, whose drawings, sketches, or pictures were discussed, changes recommended, and suggestions made. The practice obtains to some extent in the present day; and another has arisen, less commendable, namely, a habit of submitting pictures to academicians, pointedly to those who happen to be members of the hanging committee, a few days before "sending-in-day." The avowed object, that of seeking advice, may be doubted, because no time is left to take advantage of it; and an answer to the inevitable question, "Do you think my picture will be accepted?" is embarrassing in the extreme; peculiarly so if addressed to him who may be one of the temporary judges in the matter.

The annals of the Royal Academy might disclose strange stories of pictures being rejected twice, and even thrice, and accepted at last. I may record an instance that occurred in my own early experience. I formed one of the council in 1854, when a life-size portrait of Thomas Carlyle came before us; the picture seemed to me to possess considerable merit, and I was surprised at its immediate rejection. In the following year the same picture was presented, and apparently unrecognized by those who had previously rejected it; this time it was marked "doubtful," but it was not hung. My two years' service in council being over, I knew nothing of the fate of any picture till the opening of the exhibition. My surprise may be imagined when I saw the twice unsuccessful portrait in one of the principal places on the walls in Trafalgar Square. I have since seen the artist, and he assured me that the picture was never retouched between the time of its first rejection and its ultimate success. The strangest of all the strange experiences of my artistic career occurred to me some time ago.

A few weeks before "sending-in day" I received a letter from a stranger with the usual request that I would give my opinion on some pictures intended for Burlington House. I consented, little dreaming of what I was about to bring upon myself. The would-be exhibitor arrived punctually at the time named, bringing three pictures carefully covered up. He was a tall, pale, melancholy-looking young man, and he prefaced the sight of his pictures by telling me that he had passed twenty-five years in severe study of art (this staggered me, as he looked scarcely twenty-five), that he had frequently attempted to exhibit his works at different galleries, but, from some extraordinary malign influence, they were invariably rejected; and he would be extremely grateful to me if I would tell him candidly if the fault rested with his pictures, or with those who could not, or would not, see their merits. In reply to my request for a sight of his work, he placed something upon my easel that only required a glance to convince me that I was in the presence of a madman. I confess to a sensation of fear. What the artist called a picture was a piece of canvas about three feet long by two feet wide, covered with oblong and irregular blocks of thick black and yellow paint, smeared over here and there by a grayish-looking yellow mess like gooseberry-fool. When I could speak, I said:

"What is it?"

"That picture," said the young man, "is 'A Reminiscence of Kamschatka.'"

"Have you ever been there?" said I, in a faint voice.

"Never," was the reply.

"Well, then, how can it be a reminis—"

"Oh," he interrupted, "it is not finished; it is quite wet. Here, you can feel for yourself; the paint is not dry. Don't be afraid of touching the picture; you won't hurt it." I did not dare to refuse, so I put my finger into one of the black blocks, and found it wet enough. "Do you think when it is finished that the Academy will accept it?" inquired my visitor.

"I really cannot give an opinion; the committee is so uncertain in its decisions."

How on earth shall I get rid of this poor fellow? was my constant thought during this painful interview.

"The subject is quite new," said the artist; "the country unexplored by the wielder of the pencil. You will, perhaps, permit me to show you my second attempt."

I assented; "Kamschatka" was removed, to be succeeded by a larger canvas, in form upright, looking precisely like "Kamschatka" turned the other way. A broad streak of vermilion with a black dab at the top of it, exactly in the middle of similar black and yellow blocks smeared as before with gooseberry-fool; no attempt at representing a building, or a tree, or, in short, anything in heaven above or the earth beneath. Again my question:

"What is it?"

"That represents 'Moses descending from Mount Sinai with the Tables of the Law.'"

"Where is Moses?" I inquired.

"Where!" in rather a loud voice; "why," pointing to the smear of vermilion, "there, sir! surely he cannot be mistaken."

"But I cannot see the tables," I pleaded.

"How can anybody see what is not to be seen?" said the artist. "Moses holds the tables in front of him as he addresses the Israelites. His back is towards us; how then could you by any possibility see what he carries before him?"

"Very true indeed," said I; "and," pointing to black masses of dirty paint, "those are the Israelites."

"Oh, oh, you can see the Israelites then!" in a mocking tone; "I am glad of that."

"And there is the mountain," said I, making another guess.

"No, sir; that is an attempt to reproduce the cloudless sky of—of—Egypt. Was it? I forget."

"But you have made your sky rather yellow, haven't you?"

"Yellow! no; blue, sir, blue! How is it possible you can call it yellow? the ultramarine used on that sky cost me five pounds."

As I found nothing more to say about the "Moses," I asked for the next and last specimen, and was somewhat relieved to find, when it was placed on the easel, that there was a circular form, about the size of a shilling, doing duty for the moon, with a dirty streak across it, made of some gray mess evidently intended for a cloud.

"Ah," said I, "the moon — a moonlight scene, is it not?"

"Yes, shipwreck by moonlight," said the painter.

Again the black and yellow blocks covered the canvas —precisely like those in the reminiscences of Kamschatka, Mount Sinai, and the Israelites—forming a rather larger and more jumbled-together mass in front.

"What is that?" said I, pointing to the foreground.

"These are the rocks on which, as you see, the ill-fated vessel is driving, and unless the wind changes she must be wrecked. Really, sir, you must excuse me, but I fear your eyesight must be failing!"

"Well," said I, peering through my spectacles, "it is not so good as it was; and for the life of me I can't see the ship."

"You can't see the ship!" in a loud tone, in which astonishment and pity for my blindness were mingled. "Why, there is the ship plain enough!" pointing to some of the black and yellow shapes, which were as unlike a ship as they were to anything else.

The picture was then removed and packed, together with the others. As that operation was proceeding, and I was almost praying for the poor fellow to go, he said, suddenly,

"Do you happen to know Mr. —— ?" naming an old friend and academic colleague of mine.

"Very well indeed," said I.

"Do you think he would like to see my pictures?"

"Yes," said I, eagerly seizing the chance of getting rid of my crazy visitor, who now seemed very eager to go; "I am sure he would. There," said I, as with trembling fingers I wrote my colleague's address, "that is where he lives; but you must be quick or you won't find him at home;" and the artist disappeared, to my infinite relief.

In a few hours I received a letter from Mr. ——, in which he upbraided me in strong language. Among the rest he said:

"What on earth do you mean by sending a maniac to me? I owe you one for this! The man frightened me, and I got him to bring his mad things as near the fire as possible, that I might be within easy reach of the poker!"

The poor artist's works were sent to Burlington House, and I received a well-expressed note from him, telling me of their fate.

"I cannot understand the rejection of these works," he said; "and I am much hurt by it."

My principal contribution to the Exhibition of 1885 was the elaborate composition called "Knox at Holyrood," supplemented by a portrait of Mrs. Alfred Pope, the wife of the owner of my picture of "The Private View."

I am filled with astonishment, not unmixed with envy, when I hear from one of my most distinguished colleagues that his pictures—containing numbers of figures in mediæval costumes — are painted without models, either for human beings or accessories.

I should scarcely be believed if I were to sum up the outlay for dresses, models, etc., necessary for me to incur, before such a work as "Knox" could be executed. As an example, I may mention that I found it requisite to have the large brass lamp with many branches, that hangs above the figures, made on purpose for my picture; elaborate brocades had to be acquired; to say nothing of jerkins, silk hose, and such like, made to fit the models. Fuseli used to say that "nature put him out;" and Maclise seldom, if ever, used models. Let the student take note by the example of these men of the fatal effects of "painting without nature."

CHAPTER XLIX.

JOHN LEECH.

My acquaintance with John Leech — which ripened afterwards into warm friendship — began more than forty years ago in the studio of Mrs. McIan. Old playgoers will remember Mr. McIan as an actor and painter; and old painters may have seen many pictures by his clever wife, who, on the morning of my call upon her, was giving Leech some of his first lessons in oil-painting. I was introduced to the handsome young fellow, whose name was familiar to me as the author of some drawings in a new comic paper called *Punch*, and I watched his efforts, which seemed promising enough, with interest. Mrs. McIan appeared to think that Leech would soon cease to ornament *Punch*, indeed, she doubted, as did many others, that *Punch* would succeed long in attracting the public; and I joined her in the hope that her young friend would persevere in mastering the difficulty of the technicalities of oil-painting, and so place himself among the best painters of the country. She was in the wrong as to the prospects of *Punch*, and I think she was also wrong in thinking Leech would ever have succeeded in painting well. He lacked the disposition to continuous, steady, mechanical industry, necessary for success. I have often heard him ridicule the care spent on details in pictures. *Finish*, in his opinion, was so much waste of time. "When you can see what a man means to convey in his picture, in whatever way he does it, you have got all he wants, and all you ought to desire; all work after that is thrown away." These were his words, as well as I can remember them. He was, however, very desirous to be able to paint his ideas, as his efforts, fitful and uncertain, constantly proved. Many an hour did he spend in watching my own attempts to paint; and I remember on one occasion, as I was finishing a rather elaborate chandelier, he said:

"Ah, my Frith! I wasn't created to do that sort of work; I could never muster up patience for it."

After all, I think we may admit that Leech's want of success as a painter was, in a sense, a blessing in disguise. The carrying-out of his subjects into pictures — from the time necessary for their proper production — would have deprived us, perhaps, of numbers of immortal sketches; and though undoubtedly he "left off where difficulties begin"—as I once heard a painter, who was exasperated at Leech's sneers at his manipulation, say to him — he has left work behind him which will continue to delight generation after generation, so long as wit, humor, character, and beauty are appreciated—that is to say, as long as human nature endures.

It is a melancholy task to me to try to recall the social scenes in which Leech so often figured; sad to think how few of his friends, more intimate with him than I, remain. Though Leech very rarely illustrated any ideas but his own, I can recall an instance or two to the contrary; and still oftener have I seen, by the sparkle of his eye, that something in the passing conversation had suggested a "cut." As example: at Egg's one night we were talking of the difficulty that the pronunciation of certain words would present to one who had *dined* too freely. I said, after different long words had been proposed, that I thought antediluvian topics, in which such names as Ichthyosaurus and Plesiosaurus might occur, would puzzle a tipsy man a good deal. In the following week Leech gave us his idea of the appearance of a young gentleman who had rashly ventured on such difficult ground. I am not sure, but I think it was Dickens who said that a big cock pheasant, rising under one's nose, was like a firework let off in a similar locality. All the world has seen Mr. Briggs and the immortal firework. When cards, or some other way of getting rid of time after dinner, have been proposed, I have heard Leech say: "Oh, bother cards! let us have conversation." And talk it was—good talk enough often—but Leech was more a listener than a partaker; not that he could not talk, and admirably, but he was of the nervous, melancholy temperament, so common to men who possess wit and humor to a high degree. His songs were melancholy and very difficult to get from him. Indeed, the only one I can remember—and that only partially—was something about "King Death," with allusions to a beverage called "coal-black wine," which that potentate was supposed to drink. I can see the dear fellow's handsome, melancholy face, with his eyes cast up to the ceiling, where Dickens said the song was written in ghostly print, which only Leech could read.

To return for a moment to Leech's practice, he very seldom made sketches from nature. He told me that he could count upon the fingers of one hand all the drawings he had made from natural objects. In his work he trusted entirely to memory and imagination. There is an admirable cut in *Punch* of a young lady who has been bathing at Ramsgate with her aunt, whose attention she is directing to two stuffed, life-sized figures, representing soldiers, which used to stand on the sands as marks for archers. The aunt is short-sighted, and the girl is wickedly pretending that the figures are live officers watching the bathers. The aunt says they may be officers, but they cannot be gentlemen, etc. I well recollect Leech showing me a pencil drawing of the targets in human form, and telling me how seldom he adopted the practice. As I fancy I am one of the very few who have figured personally in *Punch* under Leech's pencil, I may be excused for the egotism of the following:

About the year 1852 I began the first of a series of pictures from modern life, then quite a novelty in the hands of any one who could paint tolerably. When the picture was finished, Leech came to see it, and expressed his pleasure at an artist leaving what he called "mouldy costumes," for the habits and manners of every-day life. While he was talking, two of my brother artists came and saw the picture for the first time. They both looked long at the picture, and the longer they looked, judging from their faces, the less they liked it. I shall not forget Leech's expression when I gave him a sort of questioning look as to the correctness of his judgment.

"Well, what do you think of the picture?" said Leech, to one of the artists.

"Well, really, I don't know what to think," was the reply.

Anybody caring to see the way the great artist made a picture out of this, will find it in one of the numbers of *Life and Character*, and will see me figure as Jack Armstrong, and my two artist friends as Messrs. Potter and Feeble. The background resembles my old painting-room, with armor, cabinets of oak, etc., for which memory alone served the artist. In common with many of my fellow-creatures, I proposed a great many subjects to Leech. I think he said, "Ah, capital!" to almost all of them; but in the whole course of our acquaintance he never drew but one, and that only after asking me—when I thought it had gone the way of the others—if I intended to use it myself. I had told him that my brother-in-law had taken a party to Epsom to the Derby; they went by road, and when the time came to summon the post-boy and return home, that individual was found so very drunk as to be quite incapable of sitting his horse for a moment. He was tied on to the carriage, and my brother-in-law mounted into his saddle and drove home. The scene will be familiar to those who study *Punch's* delightful volumes. How often Leech was told that he was the "backbone of *Punch*," and that if anything happened to him the days of the paper were numbered! I thought it, and said as much to him. I can see him smile, and hear him say, "Don't talk such rubbish. Why, bless your heart, there isn't a fellow at work on the paper that doesn't think *that* of himself, and with as much right and reason as I should; but I think no such nonsense."

As Leech got older his melancholy increased upon him; his extreme sensitiveness to noise became more acute, and when at last he became subject to slight attacks of *angina pectoris*, his descriptions of his sufferings from street noises of all kinds were painful to hear. My last talk with Leech was on a certain Tuesday, at a dinner-party given by an old friend of mine and Leech's, Mr. Hills, in Queen Anne Street. I sat next him at dinner, and was somewhat struck by his worn and melancholy appearance, which, I thought, had increased upon him. His constant talk during dinner was of the annoyances he was subjected to by organs, bands, barking of dogs, cock-crowing, etc. "Rather," he said, "than endure the torment that I suffer all day long, I would prefer to go to the grave where there is no noise." These were the last words I heard from John Leech. He died on the following Saturday from a severe attack of *angina pectoris*, and in the following week he was in the grave where "there is no noise."

CHAPTER L.

A GHOST STORY.

"What a piece of work is man," says Shakespeare; "in apprehension how like a god!" Among all the examples of man's power, surely the employment of the sun as an artist is one of the most wonderful. That this discovery is not of unmixed good is shown, I think, in the imminent destruction by photography of a beautiful art, that of the miniature-painter. In my earlier days the miniature-room at the Royal Academy was one of the chief attractions of the annual exhibition. The works of Sir William Ross, Thorburn, Wells, and others were exquisite examples of a delightful art, but they were powerless in competition with their rival, the sun. That distinguished artist in an instant fixes a likeness, which, by a rapid process, is prepared for the "artistic merit" with which the colorist "invests" the cheap photograph. The exhibitions of to-day still afford us examples—good ones sometimes—of struggles against the sun, and against the bad taste and ignorance of the public; but each succeeding year serves to show the diminished numbers of this "forlorn hope," and unless a fickle public tires of photography, as it does of everything else, miniature-painting will soon be numbered among the lost arts.

An artist, whom I shall call Westwood, whose miniatures are among the best of those in each year's show, is the hero of the following story, the relation of which I heard from his own lips.

Mr. Westwood is a peripatetic artist, and his wanderings have been extensive and varied; not without their charms, for he has generally found himself treated with genial hospitality and his art with respect. In one of his professional tours, a few years ago, he found himself at a country-house filled with autumn company. The house was a "moated grange," dating from the days of the Tudors, with alterations and additions of a later time, and the owner's name was Blob. A room, with the necessary north light, was set apart for the artist, whose time was to be devoted to the portraiture of the Misses and Master Blob. Westwood, like many of his tribe, was a bad sleeper, being terribly susceptible to the noises of the night, the slightest of which would always wake him from his fitful slumber, cock-crowing being held in especial horror. His satisfaction was, therefore, great when he found that he was consigned to the only vacant bedroom in the Maison Blob, from the oriel window of which tranquillity, in the shape of a huge garden, was assured to him — beyond the twittering of birds no noise could reach him.

As I have said, the house was full of company, and "a jovial crew they were," said the artist; so, with music, games, and a quadrille or two, the evening passed merrily away, and Westwood went to rest. The bed was a huge four-poster, with hearselike plumes crowning each post; opposite to it was a large oak cabinet, and to the left, and facing the door, was the oriel window. The moon shone full upon the window, making the room almost as bright as day. The excitement of the evening was not the best preparative for a bad sleeper, and for some time the painter sat by the window, and enjoyed the moonlight effects in the garden. But the effort to sleep must be made, and Westwood mounted into his big bed, and laid himself down to woo the terribly fickle god; he closed his eyes and counted the proverbial flock of sheep. He also counted up to a hundred, and had managed to count part of that number backward, when, feeling that the common receipt for sleep was unavailing, he opened his eyes. At the bottom of the bed, in full moonlight, stood the figure of a lady. She was somewhat elderly, and appeared to be looking for something she had lost. Westwood sat up in bed, and said,

"I beg your pardon; I think you have mistaken your room."

As he spoke he looked attentively at the figure, in the endeavor to identify it with one of the Blob guests, but in vain. The lady looked as if she had stepped from the canvas of Reynolds, and, to his astonishment, the oak cabinet was plainly visible through her!

"By Jove," said Westwood to himself, "here is a ghost at last! Now I call this interesting."

As these thoughts — in which he assured me fear had not the least share — passed through his mind, the figure raised its face and looked straight at the painter. It was an awful face, with an expression of horror and distress unutterable. For an instant the head was bent, and the apparent search renewed; then, as if in despairing hopelessness, the figure, wringing its hands, slowly faded away.

"What a pity she went away so soon! a little longer I could have got her face sufficiently for a sketch. Nobody would believe this. I wish she would come back!"

She did not, and, after watching for an hour or two, the artist slept.

After next morning's breakfast, Westwood took Mrs. Blob aside and told her what he had seen.

"Oh, Mr. Westwood! I am so sorry! I ought to have told you. You are not the least frightened? Oh, I am so glad! but we ought to have told you. That disagreeable room was the only vacant one, you know. Is the tiresome creature likely to come to see you again? I fear so—yes."

"I most devoutly hope so," said my friend. "Now, Mrs. Blob, I shall ask you for a lamp. I can keep it turned down very low. My water-colors shall be ready. Fire? Oh, I will be most careful. I do so want to make a sketch, and after a night or two I could manage it."

"There is a picture of the woman by Reynolds in the gallery. Can't you do it from that?"

"Please show it to me."

Into the gallery went Westwood's hostess, followed by the artist.

"Ah, I can see the likeness, but this is a young and lovely woman. Yes, she might grow into the shape and make of my ghostly visitor, but the ghost must be seventy at least."

"Yes," said Mrs. Blob, "the wretch was rather more than that when the crime was committed which she seems to be expiating in this unpleasant manner."

"Oh, a crime!" said Westwood. "What crime?"

"Really," replied the lady, "I can't bear to talk of her wickedness. Mr. Blob will tell you all about it if you desire to know more."

Westwood made a good beginning of the Blob miniature. Night came, the convivial dinner was repeated, and the artist retired, armed with palette and brushes, and waited the return of the spirit. Nor did he wait in vain. The previous night's performance was repeated, but before it began the painter addressed the ghost in these words:

"Madam, my dear madam, nobody will believe this unless I can give substantial evidence of the truth of it. Would you mind staying a little longer than usual, so that I could get your image more perfectly into my mind? I am an artist, madam, in water-colors—" Confound her, she is gone again! Never mind, I've had a deuced good look at her."

And with these words the light was turned up, and, though the sitting was all too short (as sittings so often are), a satisfactory beginning was made.

My friend was warned by his hostess to say nothing of what he had seen, to the children especially, or to any one else.

"We never use the room," said the lady, "if we can avoid doing so; and when the necessity arises we warn our guests, for the wretch is sure to visit the place. I suppose we shall end in building up the room."

(This, I hear, has since been done.) Westwood's work at the "moated grange" was over in about a fortnight, and by that time, after regular midnight visits from the spirit, he made what he assured me is not a bad likeness of his nocturnal visitor; and a most awful face it is, with a terrible, crime-haunted expression impossible to forget.

Of all my acquaintances I know none more prosaic and sensible than my old friend Westwood, who persists to this day that the drawing—photographs from which are in several hands — was a *bonâ-fide* portrait of a ghost. Before he took his departure he heard the particulars of the crime, and, though we ought not to say so, the Blobs should be grateful to the perpetrator, for the consequences of it were a vast accession of property to them.

About the year 1780 the owner of the "moated grange" and the property attached to it died, leaving an infant son heir to the property, whose mother died in giving him birth. The child was but a few weeks old when it was left to the care of an old lady, whose family were interested in its death, because, if that event occurred, the estates would revert to them. The heir died suddenly from a fit of convulsions, as announced in the country paper; the truth being that the old lady sent the nurse out of the room—which she afterwards haunted—on an errand that required some little time for the fulfilment of its duties, and in her absence the murderess smothered the child with a pillow as it lay in its cot on the floor. This is the tale as it was told to me, and I think it would be difficult to find a better authenticated ghost-story.

I supplement Westwood's story by an unpleasant experience of another friend of mine.

At Knebworth, the seat of Lord Lytton, there is a bedchamber called the "Yellow Boy's Room." The story goes that Lord Castlereagh — Byron's "carotid-cutting Castlereagh"—was, on one occasion, the guest of the late Lord Lytton's father. Without any warning he was consigned, for the night, to the "Yellow Boy's Room." On the following morning Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Bulwer that he had been disturbed in the night in a very startling and unpleasant fashion.

"I was very tired," said my lord, "and was soon asleep. I could not have slept long, for the wood-fire opposite the foot of my bed was still burning when I started up. What awoke me I know not. I looked in the direction of the fire and saw, sitting with its back towards me, what appeared to be the figure of a boy with long, yellowish hair. As I looked the figure arose, turned towards me, and, drawing back the curtain at the bottom of the bed with one hand, with the other he drew his fingers two or three times across his throat. I saw him," said my lord, "as distinctly as I see you now."

"You must have been dreaming," said Bulwer.

"No, I was wide awake."

Mr. Bulwer did *not* tell Lord Castlereagh that the "Yellow Boy" always appeared to any one who was destined to die a violent death, and always indicated the manner of it to the victim.

These details were communicated by the late Lord Lytton to an extremely nervous — not to say timid — artist friend of mine at midnight of the first day of his visit to Knebworth.

"You are not nervous, I know, my dear Mr. Green, or I would have kept this from you, as you will sleep in the 'Yellow Boy's Room' to-night. You will not be frightened, will you?"

"No—no—o," said my friend, with an ashy face.

"Well, it is getting late; what do you say to retiring? Yes, that is your candle. Too warm for a fire in your room. You don't mind? Good-night."

The rest of the story shall be told in my old friend's words, as nearly as I can remember them.

"I had seen the infernal room before dinner, and I thought it looked a ghostly sort of place; and when I reached it that night, what would I not have given to be back in my own room at home! I looked under the bed, up the great, wide chimney, and had a shock from the sight of my own face in the looking-glass. No ghost could be whiter than I was. I don't believe in ghosts, you know; but still it was really too bad of Lytton to tell me such things just as I was going to bed, and then to put me in the very place! There was an awful old cabinet. I managed to pull one door open, and was tugging at the other, when my candle went out — how, I don't know — somebody seemed to blow it out. I can't tell you what became of it; all I know is I jumped into bed with my boots on, and lay trembling there for hours, Frith—literally for hours—till sleep took me at last: and never was I more thankful than when I awoke and saw the sun shining into the 'Yellow Boy's Room.'"

CHAPTER LI.

THE STORY OF MY PORTRAIT.

THE student need never be at a loss for a model, so long as he possesses a looking-glass. Better practice than the reproduction of his own features cannot be followed. He is sure of a patient sitter, and he has the example of nearly all the great painters, whose "very form and feature" have come down to us limned by their own hands.

There are between thirty and forty portraits of Rembrandt painted by himself. Some of Reynolds' finest works are reproductions of himself in his habit as he lived; and the forms of Titian, Vandyke, Rubens, Raphael, and Leonardo, to say nothing of nearly—if not quite—all the great Dutchmen, are as familiar to us as household words. I share—in common with all my fellow-creatures—the eager curiosity that every one feels respecting the outward and visible form of the producer of works of genius, be they artistic or literary. Portrait-painting, speaking generally, is to me the most difficult part of the art, and my own likeness has defied me over and over again.

In my youth, and in the absence of a better model, I spent hour after hour staring into a mirror, with results unrecognizable by my friends as likenesses of myself. One of the best of these portraits is in the possession of my old friend Mr. J. C. Parkinson, so well known as the genial and accomplished friend of Dickens (to whose *Household Words* he so often contributed). I believe Mr. Parkinson found me in a shop-window, and possessed me without a great pecuniary sacrifice. Mr. Parkinson is doubtless well known to my readers as the author of several works displaying considerable literary ability, showing a more powerful grasp than that necessary—or possible even—for the fugitive pieces in the periodical press. My old friend numbers among his acquaintances nearly every man of mark in London, and I believe there is not one among them who would not be pleased to consider himself his friend.

Another early work was brought to my notice by a friend who discovered it in an establishment in Great Portland Street.

"It is a capital picture," he said, "and though not a bit like what you are now, I fancy it may have resembled you scores of years ago. Go and look at it."

I yielded to the advice, and made my way to Great Portland Street, where, in a shabby gallery behind a shop, I saw my own image, after an estrangement of five-and-forty years. I have not the least recollection of parting with the portrait, either by way of sale or gift, nor could I trace its wanderings from any information that the shopkeeper could afford me; but I determined to buy it if the price were reasonable. I found the presiding genius of the place was a woman. After examining several works of a very uninteresting character, I affected to catch a sight of my own portrait, and said:

"Ah, a portrait! Whose likeness is that?"

"That," said the lady, "is a portrait of the celebrated artist, Frith, painted by himself."

"Frith?" said I; "why, he must be quite an elderly man."

"Well, sir, but he was young once; and that's what he was when he was young."

"Hum—ha!" said I, pretending to examine the picture. "Not much of a picture."

"I beg your pardon; judges think it a very fine picture."

"Well, what is the price?"

"Twenty pounds."

"Surely that is a stiff price?" said I.

"Well," said the woman, "it cost us nearly as much; we shall make a very small profit. You see, it is very valuable, because the artist is *diseased.*"

"Deceased!" I exclaimed. "Dead, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir. Died of drink."

"Surely," I exclaimed, "you have made a mistake!"

"About the drink? Oh, no, sir; most artists is very dissipated. He was dreadful, Frith was. I dare say you have seen the print called 'The Railway Station.' Well, my husband used to see him when he was doing of it, always more or less in liquor. My husband wondered how he could do his work; but it wore him out at last—the drink did."

"Why," said I, "how can that be, when I tell you a friend of mine saw him the other day?"

"Not Frith, your friend didn't. How could he? when he's dead and buried, as I well know, for my husband attended his funeral!"

"Can't you modify the price of the portrait a little?" said I. "Twenty pounds is too much."

"No, sir—that is what my husband fixed the price at; I was never to take no less. My husband and him was great friends, and he would rather keep the likeness than sell it for less."

Finding the woman immovable, I paid the money, and the portrait is now in my possession. I did not reveal myself to the shopkeeper, for she would not have believed me if I had assured her of what she may learn, if by a very unlikely chance she reads these pages—that I am not *diseased*, and that I never was drunk but once in my life, and the consequences of that lapse were so very unpleasant that I have no fear of ever repeating the indiscretion.

I may have a difficulty in persuading my readers that a young artist may spend hours, even days, over a picture, and then forget all about it to such a degree as to make the sight of it, after a long lapse of time, perfectly new to him; that is to say, he will not recognize it as anything he has previously seen. Such, however, is the fact; and it is no less true that artists have been known to repudiate pictures afterwards conclusively proved to be authentic, with consequences unpleasant to themselves.

I will give an example. A picture, with the name of Poole, R.A., attached to it, was sold at Christie's. The purchaser, though perfectly satisfied of its originality, sent the picture to the artist, with a request that he would sign it. Poole looked at the picture, and then at the messenger, and said :

"Tell the person who sent this thing for me to sign that it is not my work. I never saw it before, and I hope I shall never see it again."

"Indeed !" said the owner, when the message was conveyed to him, "then I will have my money restored to me."

Messrs. Christie put the buyer in communication with the seller, with the following result :

"Oh ! Poole denies he did it, does he ? Look here, I have his own receipt for the purchase-money, received from his own hands in the year ——. I will go to the artist with you."

And to the artist both buyer and seller went.

"As I told your messenger," said Poole, "I never saw the picture before in my life. You, sir ? No, I have no recollection of ever having seen you."

"Do you think you would know your own handwriting, sir ?" said the seller.

"Suppose I should," said Poole.

"Then do me the favor to cast your eye over that," showing receipt.

Poole read—a pause.

"Yes, that is my receipt, sure enough."

Then a long and steady look at the picture by the artist.

"I can't for the life of me recollect it," said he ; "but I do remember painting a small picture of 'Lear and Cordelia' in the year ——. I painted it on a piece of panel made from the wood of an old worn-out piano, and if that is the one, you will find a small knot in the wood at the back.

The picture was turned round, and, lo ! the knot ! Profuse apology from the painter, and his signature was placed on the picture.

In the days of Reynolds the forgetfulness of artists of their early works was broached at the dinner-table in Leicester Fields. Reynolds could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of a man's so completely forgetting the production of his own brain and hand. Some months after the discussion a very early work of Reynolds' came into the possession of Burke. That distinguished man, accompanied by a friend—Bennet Langton, I think—called upon Reynolds, and showed him the picture as the work of a young student whose friends were anxious to know if the great painter would advise, from the specimen shown, that the young man should be allowed to adopt art as his profession. Reynolds looked long at the picture, and, turning to Burke, said :

"Is the painter of this a friend of yours?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I know and am much interested in him."

"Well," said Sir Joshua, again studying the portrait attentively, "I really don't feel able to give an opinion one way or the other. *It is a cleverish thing*, but whether there is sufficient promise in it to justify my advising the young man to adopt art as his profession I really cannot say."

The picture was proved to be Reynolds' work, but the artist had completely forgotten it. In my own career I have experienced the truth of this strange fact. A gentleman, whose father's portrait I had painted when I was very young, was desirous that I should see it, and said as much to a friend of mine. I went to his house, and was shown into the dining-room, in which there were several portraits, and mine among them ; but I was quite unable to say which of the series—they were all pretty bad—was painted by me.

CHAPTER LII.

JENNY LIND, MR. BARNUM, AND OTHERS.

PROMINENT characters live in an atmosphere of rumor. The celebrated American, Mr. Barnum, *entrepreneur*, showman, and "universal provider" of all kinds of amusement, holds a distinguished place in the public mind, favorable or unfavorable. According to the dictates of rumor, I think the idea of most people would be, that if Mr. Barnum had entered into an engagement highly beneficial to himself, he would not permit it to be broken for the benefit of somebody else. That is what rumor would say; and what I am about to relate will prove that rumor lies, as usual. I may premise that I have not the honor of Mr. Barnum's acquaintance; my sole object in making known an incident connected with him being to prove how mistaken those may be who can only see in the dealer in amusements the hard and exacting taskmaster.

All the world has heard of Jenny Lind, but all the world may not know that she was only on the stage two years, and that part of that time was spent in America, whither the Swedish songstress went, bound by a legal engagement to sing under Mr. Barnum's management and direction only. Whether from being badly advised, or from the undervaluing of powers common to modest genius, Mademoiselle Lind found, on her arrival in America, that she had made a terrible mistake in the terms of her engagement. She was fast bound, and she knew it; and in default of a release from the awful Barnum, she was prepared to fulfil her duties to the letter. Immediately after the lady's arrival Mr. Barnum appeared. He listened to reasons and explanations, all demonstrating, from the singer's point of view, the mistake that had been made; and he was assured that if those reasons had no weight with him, he might rely on every point of the engagement being religiously carried out.

"This, madam, is the document you signed in England, is it not?" said Mr. Barnum, producing a deed.

"Undoubtedly," said the lady, "and I am ready to abide by it, if I have been unable to convince—"

"Be so good as to destroy it. Tear it up, madam; and if you will instruct your lawyer to prepare another from your own dictation, naming whatever you think fair for your services, I will sign it without hesitation."

This was done; the terms were satisfactorily increased, and the engagement was fulfilled so successfully as to leave Mr. Barnum a substantial reward for his generosity.

I had the honor and pleasure of meeting Madame Otto Goldschmidt at dinner, at my friend Mr. Lumley Smith's house, when I heard the foregoing from her own lips, and at the same time received permission to make it as public as I pleased.

In writing of one great singer, I am reminded of the many delightful evenings on which I have met others at the hospitable house of Mr. J. M. Levy in Lancaster Gate, and in Grosvenor Street. Nilsson, Patti, and Titiens were constant guests; and, if my memory does not betray me, I heard all three sing on the same evening, in the drawing-room at Lancaster Gate. It would be difficult to imagine more charming gatherings than those collected by Mr. Levy, more sumptuous dinners, better wines, or—most valued of all, by some—rarer cigars, than those offered to his guests. My first sight of Rubinstein was there. In short, if I were to go on naming the distinguished people collected together I should have to mention most of the "lions" of each London season.

On one memorable occasion we were honored by the company of the "Midgets," who were served with a miniature dinner, all to themselves. When they were at their dessert I leaned over the female Midget, who was very like a monkey, and as spiteful as one, and asked her for a grape from her little plate. She placed her left hand over the plate, and with her fork in the right she made a dash at my face, which might have deprived me of the sight of an eye, for she only just missed one of them. After dinner Nilsson took them in her arms and, sitting on the floor, sang to them. The wondering, rather frightened expression of the creatures' faces was striking, as indeed was Nilsson herself, looking like a splendid embodiment of Charity with her attendant children.

CHAPTER LIII.

LADY ARTISTS.

I FEAR it must be admitted, if we study the history of art from its earliest development, that few female names adorn it; we have a long and honored list of old masters, but no old mistresses. In the first list of names of Royal Academicians we find two of the gentler sex—Angelica Kauffman and Mary Moser; the first was a painter of historical and Scripture pieces, the second a fruit and flower painter. Neither of these attained a high level in their respective ranks; Mrs. Moser being far surpassed by the Misses Mutrie of our day. I cannot recall the precise date of the admission of lady students to the Royal Academy, but a very few years ago they were inadmissible; now they are almost equal in number to the male students, from whom they constantly carry off prizes. Whether the means and methods of study, shared equally (except in one important particular) with their rougher rivals, will in course of time qualify them to become old mistresses to future ages, time only can prove. My position as visitor, or teacher, in the higher schools has brought me into contact with numbers of lady students, whose admirable studies from the life have often surprised and delighted me; and in the Antique School I have seen drawings by mere girls that could not be surpassed. Here, then, we have students armed with the means of producing good, and even great, pictures; and I think I may safely assert that if the great pictures are yet to come, our annual exhibitions show good ones by several female artists. The sensation created by the exhibition of Miss Thompson's picture of "The Roll Call" must be well within the memory of my readers. I fear we cannot claim this lady as a student of the Academy, but we have several others of whom we may justly boast. Among the first, as practising in the higher walk of art, is Mrs. Ernest Norman, who, under her maiden name, Miss Rae, has exhibited during the last three years works of a poetic character that would do credit to any school.

The names of the sisters Montalba, as painters and sculptors, are pleasantly familiar to all visitors to Burlington House, their works showing not only able performance, but great promise for the future. Many men would be proud to see their names attached to the pictures of Mrs. F. Morgan, who under her maiden name, Alice Havers, has again and again exhibited works full of nature, beauty, and truth. As I write these words I am reminded of one whom I honor more than any living female painter, always excepting Rosa Bonheur, of whom I shall speak presently. For the most delightful treatment of homely and sometimes unpromising subjects, for the most subtle and intense appreciation of beauty, whether of color or of form, in all its aspects, the water-color drawings of Mrs. Allingham may be sought for in the Pall Mall Gallery with a certainty of delight to the student, as well as to the ordinary visitor. Whether the subject chosen by this admirable artist be a nursery group occupied in nursery trifling, or a woman hanging out clothes in a cottage garden, with its flowers and homely surroundings, these commonplace themes are invested with such exquisite art as to make them "a joy forever." I can scarcely boast of even a slight acquaintance with Mrs. Allingham—or, indeed, with any of the ladies I have mentioned—but I do confess to sensations of envy when I recognize the intense feeling for nature, and the happiness that must accrue from such perfect rendering of its beauties, as this lady possesses.

There is yet another member of the Old Water Color Society whose drawings of fruit and flowers *were*—for, unhappily, she is no longer living—of the highest excellence, and for many years worthily considered great attractions of the yearly exhibitions in Pall Mall. Excepting by William Hunt, Mrs. Angel's drawings of dead birds, flowers, and fruit were never surpassed.

I feel I am not out of place, as a member of the Royal Academy, in giving expression to my satisfaction—which I know to be shared by many of my colleagues—with the works of so many of the ladies who "take their chance" with us every year; and among the most prominent are my old friends Miss Starr, now Madame Canziani, and Miss Kate Dickens, now Mrs. Perugini. Miss Starr is a gold medallist, and her exhibition-work year after year sufficiently proves that she has taken full advantage of her academic education. It is a sad reflection that the premature death of Charles Dickens—occurring as it did before his daughter became known as an artist—should have deprived him of the happiness of witnessing Mrs. Perugini's successes. The interest Dickens always took in art and artists would have been intensified—how greatly! —when he found one so near and dear to him among its valued professors.

Artists' wives and sisters are frequent exhibitors, and some of them excellent painters. For many years—indeed, till the lamented death of her husband—my old friend, Mrs. E. M. Ward, held a well-won position on the Academy walls. Her pictures always displayed a thorough knowledge of the principles of art, and these she now imparts to a large school full of ladies, whose progress I, in company with some of my colleagues, have the satisfaction of superintending from time to time. The exhibited works of Mrs. Alma Tadema afford proofs of original power developed under the eye of her distinguished husband.

Miss Dicksee, Miss Gow, and Mrs. Seymour-Lucas (one of whose pictures in the last exhibition received the compliment of being selected by Sir Frederick Leighton for the Art Gallery at Melbourne) are nearly connected with the admirable artists whose names they bear, and how worthily those names are borne may be seen every year at Burlington House. More fortunate are my friends in their sisters than Sir Joshua Reynolds was in his, for it is related that Miss Reynolds' pictures were of such a character that "they made her brother cry and everybody else laugh."

With every desire to do justice to our lady exhibitors, I may forget some of whom I ought to make honorable mention. I think we owe them a debt of gratitude; and to those already mentioned I must add the names of Mrs. Lea Merritt, Miss Osborne, Mrs. Jopling, Miss Dealy, and no doubt I ought to enumerate many others. Whether we shall have female academicians or not depends upon the ladies themselves; all the honors the Academy can bestow are open to them, from the lowly seat of the associate to the presidential chair. A female president is not impossible. After the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mrs. Moser might have reigned in that great man's stead if she had received sufficient support, for all members were candidates. The fates were against her, for she only obtained one vote — that of Fuseli — against Benjamin West, who had all the rest. Fuseli met the remonstrance of a brother academician by declaring that "he did not see why he shouldn't vote for one old woman as well as another." I most sincerely hope that we have among us young mistresses in the art of painting that future ages may see fit to rank among the old masters; and though I decline to prophesy with respect to England, I feel sure I am a true prophet when I say that France possesses a lady artist whose name will never die. That name is Rosa Bonheur.

In 1868 the Great Exhibition was held in Paris, in which the English school of painting was worthily represented, and as worthily acknowledged by the French. I went to Paris accompanied by Millais, as I have noted elsewhere. Our friend Gambart was the first to introduce the works of Rosa Bonheur to the English collectors. The famous "Horse Fair" passed through his hands, together with very many others, some of which still remain with him in his marble palace at Nice. Above and beyond all the eminent French artists to whom Gambart introduced us, we were most anxious to make the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Rosa Bonheur. Our desire was no sooner made known to that lady than it was gratified, for we received an invitation to luncheon with her at her chateau in the Forest of Fontainebleau. See us, then, arrive at the station, where a carriage waits, the coachman appearing to be a French abbé. The driver wore a black, broad-brimmed hat and black cloak, and had long white hair, with a cheery, rosy face.

"But that red ribbon?" said I to Gambart. "Do priests wear the Legion of Honor?"

"Priest!" replied Gambart; "what priest? That is Mademoiselle Bonheur. She is one of the very few ladies in France who is *décorée.* You can speak French; get on to the box beside her."

Then, chatting delightfully, we were driven to the chateau, in ancient times one of the forest-keeper's lodges, castellated and picturesque to the last degree; date about Louis XIII. There lives the great painter with a lady companion; and others in the form of boars, lions, and deer, who serve as models. The artist had little or nothing to show us of her own work. Her health had not been good of late; besides, when her "work is done it is always carried off," she said. Stretching along one side of a very large studio was a composition in outline of corn-threshing—in Spain, I think—the operation being performed by horses, which are made to gallop over the sheaves—a magnificent work, begging to be completed.

"Ah," said the lady, looking wistfully at the huge canvas, "I don't know if I shall ever finish that!"

Of course Millais was deservedly overwhelmed with compliments, and I came in for my little share. That the luncheon was delightful goes without saying. One incident touched me. We spoke much of Landseer, whose acquaintance Rosa Bonheur had made on a visit to England, and with whose work she had, of course, great sympathy. Gambart repeated to her some words of praise given by Landseer to a picture of hers then exhibiting in London. Her eyes filled with tears as she listened. I can speak no more of female painters after paying an imperfect tribute to the greatest of all, so that with that immortal name I conclude this chapter upon lady artists.

CHAPTER LIV.

PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN.

If it be true that a man can put no more into his work than there is in himself, it is also undeniable that his work —if it be a picture—will betray the real character of its author; who, in the unconscious development of his peculiarities, constantly presents to the initiated signs by which an infallible judgment may be pronounced on the painter's mind and character.

If an artist have a vulgar mind, his work will be vulgar; if he be of a shifty and untruthful nature, his picture will faithfully reflect these faults. We know Vandyke must have been a refined and courtly gentleman, as surely as we are convinced that Jan Stein was the jovial, often drunken, companion of the guests at kermess or ale-house.

Though I speak under correction as regards authors and books, I have often proved, to my own satisfaction, that it is as difficult for a writer to hide his real character when he employs the pen, as it is for the artist to be false to himself when he uses the brush. It would, however, require an intimate acquaintance with some celebrated persons—writers and others—to discover qualities in them which their published performances imperfectly display.

Among "men I have known," the late Shirley Brooks was a notable example of a man whose conversation and private correspondence were so sparkling and delightful as to throw his novels, admirable as they are, completely into the shade.

As an example, I introduce in this place a letter written by Brooks in the name of Miss Baynes, the landlady of the Granby Hotel at Harrogate. It is needless to say that the paragraph alluded to was fictitious. The "early pictures" were some of my first efforts, presented to Miss

Baynes many years ago, and they now hang on the walls of the Granby.

"DEAR MR. FRITH,—Not being well able to write, I use the pen of our mutual friend, Mr. S. Brooks, who has kindly consented to convey to you a request which I have hardly the courage to make. But your kindness in the matter of your early pictures emboldens me to address you.

"The local authorities have decided that all the hotels in Harrogate shall have *signs*, and against this arbitrary rule we have petitioned in vain. The enclosed paragraph shows you our lamentable case.

"Would you be so kind as to paint me a sign for the Granby? I should take it very well of you. I have heard from a friend of yours that you can do *this* sort of thing very well, and if you have any difficulty I am sure that your friend, Mr. E. M. Ward, R.A., would assist you with advice and example. I leave the subject to yourself, but I need hardly say that it must not be at all objectionable in a *moral* point of view, as the visitors to the Granby are very high-toned about virtue and grub. If you did not mind (and I am aware that I may offend your modesty, which is one of your most pleasing characteristics) painting your own head for the sign, I should be very glad, and *it would be a good advertisement for you;* but if you prefer painting any other Guy, I shall be equally thankful. Terms shall not separate us, and if you would like to come and reside here for a fortnight, as soon as the *respectable* people are gone, you shall be treated as one of the family. Then you could hang the picture yourself, and as you have lately been on the hanging committee I shall feel much confidence in you.

"My nieces send their duty. They wish the sign to be the 'Queen Charlotte,' in honor of the elder; but you may not like this, for though her features are very charming, they are not what you would call Academical. But, if you come down, you can settle this with her.

"I must not trespass longer on your patience, or on that of Mr. Brooks, who is restless to get away and smoke. He is a delightful man, and I am glad that you *now* choose such excellent companions. It was not always so; but we need not revert to the follies of youth—we have all been young.

"I should like this color to be predominant in the picture I ask for; and I am, dear Mr. Frith,

"Yours faithfully and sincerely,

"MISS BAYNES."

The color that was to be "predominant in the picture" was indicated by a piece of bright red paper attached to the letter.

I shrink from speaking of living persons; but, having nothing disagreeable to say of any of them, I hope I shall be forgiven for introducing their names.

Of my old friend George Augustus Sala I am only echoing general opinion when I say he is one of the most brilliant and accomplished of living writers and talkers—witness his after-dinner speeches, scarcely surpassed by Dickens, the greatest speaker of all.

The novels of Edmund Yates are—or have been—in the hands of most people; but few, speaking comparatively, can have experienced the ready wit, the quick retort, and the rest of his admirable dinner-table talk which it has fallen to my happy lot to share on innumerable occasions.

When I speak of Wilkie Collins, whom I have known all his life, I shall meet with no contradiction when I say he is one of the most popular novelists of the present day. There again you have a man who is as delightful in private as he is in public. That he is an admirable *raconteur* goes without saying; of an imperturbably good temper, as he proved on one occasion at my own table, when a rude guest—of whom I was heartily ashamed—after declaring that popularity was no proof of merit, said to Collins by way of example:

"Why, your novels are read in every back-kitchen in England."

This Collins heard without a sign of irritation.

On the same occasion that dreadful person told Shirley Brooks (then editor of *Punch*) that, of all the papers published in London, he considered *Punch* the dullest.

"I wonder you ever read it," said Brooks.

"I never do," was the reply.

"I was sure of that," said Brooks, "by your foolish observation."

I need scarcely say that this was the first and last time that my disagreeable guest appeared at my table. But I had a further experience of his unpleasantness. He wrote to me saying he had purchased a collection of drawings by the old masters; and though—knowing his dense ignorance of art—I made many excuses for not keeping appointments to see them, he persisted in dragging me to his hotel. When I refused to believe that a bad Dutch drawing of a "merry-making" was the work of Raphael, and that another wretched thing was done by Michael

Angelo, he told me that painting bad modern pictures had completely blinded me, and that he should show me no more of his treasures. I was thankful to see the last of him and his drawings; and I afterwards heard that he was expelled from his club, where he had succeeded in insulting every member of it.

From this disagreeable "man I have known" I turn to Anthony Trollope, none of whose works I had read till a few years ago, though I had known their author for a long time.

I must confess that my theory of men and their resemblance to their works must fall to the ground in Trollope's case, for it would be impossible to imagine anything less like his novels than the author of them. The books, full of gentleness, grace, and refinement; the writer of them, bluff, loud, stormy, and contentious; neither a brilliant talker nor a good speaker; but a kinder-hearted man and a truer friend never lived. What chance his works have of immortality I know no more than the prophets who are forever telling us that A.'s works will be read a hundred years hence, and B.'s will not. Dr. Johnson said: "Sterne, sir? why, the man is already forgotten!" This the sage enounced when "Tristram Shandy" had been published, proving himself as good—or bad—a prophet as the rest of them.

I now come to another living author, whose name I suppress, merely adding that it is one that would be known to all my readers. My acquaintance with this gentleman was brief, as I shall proceed to show.

Those who have had the honor of dining at the Mansion House will remember that the lord mayor, attended by certain imposing city personages, stands in an outer gallery to receive his guests, and that an avenue of them soon collects to watch new-comers. I was one among those who formed one side of the avenue, when a gentleman was brought to me and introduced. The figure was strange to me, but the name very familiar.

"Mr. Frith," said the gentleman, "I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I have long admired your works. Indeed I possess several of them, and they are a great delight to me" (engravings, I thought); "and now that I have the pleasure of knowing you—as we are neighbors—I hope we shall improve our acquaintance."

I made the inevitable reply, and then said:

"I had no idea we were neighbors. In what part of Bayswater do you live?"

"Bayswater!" exclaimed my new acquaintance. "Bayswater! I don't live in Bayswater. I live at Reigate. So do you."

"No," said I, "I don't. I never was at Reigate but once in my life."

"Why—how—what—are you not Mr. Frith, the photographer?"

"No," said I; "I have not that honor."

"Who are you, then?" said the author, rather abruptly.

"I am only an artist—a painter," said I.

"Indeed! Ah, I am disap— I mean, I have so much desired to meet your namesake. Do you happen to know who that is who has just shaken hands with the lord mayor?"

It was quite evident that the author did not know my name as an artist, which I flatter myself is curious. But this experience is thrown into shade by that of a highly-distinguished fellow-artist, as the following story sufficiently proves.

In my student-days at the Royal Academy there was a young and rather clever fellow who rejoiced in the name of Potherd. He was a lanky lad, and he wore a long blue cloak with a cat-skin collar. Millais was contemporary with Potherd, but still a little boy when Potherd launched himself into the world as a full-fledged painter. No one ever heard of Potherd as an artist, but everybody, or nearly everybody, had already heard of Millais, who had painted some of his most famous works. One day when Millais, then grown into manhood, was walking somewhere in Camden Town, he saw a figure in a long blue cloak with a cat-skin collar, trudging slowly along before him.

"Surely," said Millais to himself, "I know that cloak and the cat-skin collar. Can the man be Potherd?"

Millais quickened his pace and overtook the blue cloak.

"Why, Potherd," said he, "it *is* you! How are you?"

"I am pretty well," said Potherd. "And who may you be?"

"I am Millais," said the painter. "Don't you remember me at the Academy?"

"Not little Johnny Millais, surely?" exclaimed Potherd. "Why, how you have grown!"

"Well, Potherd, I am very glad to see you again. How are you getting on?"

"Oh, middling. I don't find it a very good business. I teach a little, and do a portrait now and then when I can get anybody to sit. And you? Judging from your appearance, I should say you had given the arts the go-by. *What do you do for a living?*"

The truth of this may be relied upon, as I have heard it more than once from Millais himself.

My pen has run away with me, as usual. I return to my theme, which I resume in the name of Alfred Austin, author of "The Season" and other works. Among conversationalists Mr. Austin holds high rank, and readers of "The Season" will agree with me when I say that there are many lines in that satire worthy of the greatest writers of satirical verse. Being nothing of a politician myself, I find it difficult to understand the all-absorbing passion that possesses some men in the discussion and advocacy of political questions, and when—as I venture to think in the example of my friend—a remarkable intellect is allowed to spend itself in leading articles, however brilliant, or in essays, however closely argued, on questions of the hour, a serious loss to the higher forms of literature is the result. I still look to Alfred Austin for poetic work, either in prose or rhyme, that will realize all the promise foreshadowed by "The Season."

It would be difficult to discover a man more fitted in all respects for the editorial chair of *Punch* than Mr. F. C. Burnand. Possessing the satiric power that overflows Mr. Austin's "Season," Mr. Burnand is also eminently distinguished as a humorist. I cannot boast of intimacy with the editor of *Punch*, but I have met him very often, and as often with delightfully amusing results. On one occasion

I described to him a dinner-party at the Langham Hotel, given by that bright genius, "Ouida," at which—as, indeed, at several others—I had the honor of assisting. The dinner and the company were delightful. One charm of it, to me (being, I regret to say, an inveterate smoker), was the introduction of cigarettes during the course of the dinner, beginning, I think, after the fish. I had heard of the fashion in foreign countries, but it surprised me as occurring in England.

"Why were you surprised?" said Burnand. "You were dining with a Weeda."

Of all the men I have known, none dwells more pleasantly in my memory than Samuel Lover, painter, poet, playwright, and public entertainer. Many were the evenings at my house that were made to pass on rosy wing by the good stories, and still better playing and singing, of Lover. For some years the miniature-room of the Academy was enriched by the works of that universal genius. My first sight of Lover was in the year 1843, when he came to see my picture of "Falstaff and his Friends." Plays by him were being acted at two or three theatres, novels and songs were produced with extraordinary rapidity, and still time—and much of it—was found for the production of excellent miniatures, one of those being shown to me on the occasion of his visit.

"How you can find time for all you do," said I, "I cannot imagine."

"Well, it is not generally known," said Lover, "but the truth is, the fairies help me."

In the year 1850 I was at work sketching from the rooms and pictures at Knole House. It was said that the housekeeper received small wages, if any, as the great number of visitors—then permitted to visit the house and its treasures—were supposed to contribute enough to make a satisfactory salary for that functionary. I well remember being disturbed in my work by a gentleman and two ladies. The gentleman was Count d'Orsay; one of the ladies was Lady Blessington, and the other her niece, I think, Miss Power. There are many ways of being known, one being "known by sight." This is the only knowledge

I possess of Count d'Orsay; but I hope the following story, told me by Sir Edwin Landseer, will be accepted as an excuse for introducing the count among "people I have known." D'Orsay was remarkably handsome, and as extravagant as he was good-looking. The result of the former advantage was a danger to the heart of every lady that approached him, and the consequence of the latter was imprisonment in Gore House on every day but Sunday. Arrest for debt was in full swing in D'Orsay's time. His "constitutional," therefore, was taken in the gardens of the mansion on week-days, and anywhere abroad on Sundays. The count was an accomplished man, notably as an artist; his practice being chiefly in portraits, among which were likenesses of the queen and the great Duke of Wellington. The queen was represented on horseback, and the picture was received with so much favor that an engraving was made from it. Before a copy of a picture in any style of engraving can be accepted by a publisher it must receive revision and what is technically called "touching" by the producer of the picture from which it is made; and here arose a great difficulty. The engraver would not submit his work for scrutiny on a Sunday, and D'Orsay's delicate position prevented his seeing it on any other day.

"My dear Edwin," said he to Landseer, "what am I to do? the publisher will not pay me for the copyright till I have touched the proofs; and this miserable engraver refuses to receive me on a Sunday."

"There is nothing for it but a disguise," said Landseer. "Wrap yourself well up; come and breakfast with me some morning, and I will go with you to the engraver."

A time was fixed; and the count, with much misgiving, and his face half hidden by a neckerchief, left the secure refuge of Gore House, and arrived in safety at Landseer's in St. John's Wood Road. The breakfast was very gay; each additional moment of security raised D'Orsay's spirits higher. The engraving was criticised, and the "touching" satisfactorily effected. Gayer and gayer grew the count.

"My dear Edwin," said he, "I want to see something;

'tis long—ah! how long!—since I have seen any public entertainment. Where can we go? What can we see?"

"I don't know," said Landseer, looking at his watch; "what can be seen at twelve o'clock in the day?" Then, after a pause, "There is nothing for it but Madame Tussaud's."

"Ah!" exclaimed the count, "admirable! The wax-works—I have never seen them."

And to Baker Street went the two adventurers.

D'Orsay's delight was childlike, but brief. They had not been long in the rooms before D'Orsay touched Landseer's arm to draw his attention to two men who, at a little distance, were evidently watching the count and his friend.

D'Orsay was very pale as he said:

"Let us go to the 'Chamber of Horrors.'"

The extra sixpences were paid; but before the waxen murderers could be discussed the two strangers seemed to have paid their sixpences also, and were close to the count, when one of them, politely removing his hat, inquired if he had the honor of addressing Count d'Orsay.

"Yes," said he, in a dignified tone, and drawing himself up to his full height, "I am Count d'Orsay."

"My lord," said the man, "Madame Tussaud, the old lady which your lordship saw as you came in—"

"Well, sir," said the count, in tremulous tones, "what of the lady?"

"She has sent me to ask if you would do her the honor to let her model you in wax?"

"In wax!" exclaimed the count; "in marble, bronze, iron, my good fellow. Tell her, with my love, she may model me in anything!"

Yet another D'Orsay story, which I heard from Dr. Herring:

On the few halcyon days on which Count d'Orsay could move about without fear of arrest, he was generally accompanied by a huge dog of a somewhat fierce disposition. This animal was possessed of intelligence superior to most dogs.

"He knows quite well," said the count, "the different classes of railway carriages, and always insists on travelling in the first. Oh, yes, I always take a dog-ticket, as he knows quite well; but he objects to the 'coffin,'" as D'Orsay called the dog-compartment. "The other day," he continued, "I was sitting in my place waiting for the train to start, with Hector on the seat next to me, when the guard poked in his head and said:

"'That dog must not be there, sir. Have you got a ticket for him?'

"'Yes; here it is.'

"'But there is a place in the van for dogs, and he must go to it.'

"'Take him, then,' said I.

"The man with great courage attempted to seize my Hector, who, with a snarl that appalled that brave guard, snapped at his hand, and would have eaten it in another moment if the train had not started on the instant. And Hector rode once more first-class at *cofeen praice.*"

This story fails somewhat for the want of the delightful broken-English in which Herring used to tell it.

Actors must now appear among the "people I have known." And first and foremost in all respects is Miss Ellen Terry, whose kind patience in sitting for the picture of "The Private View" I shall ever gratefully remember. The merits of this lady are so patent to the world as to need no eulogy from me.

Delightful as was Miss Terry's Juliet, the nurse of Mrs. Stirling was no less perfect. I am old enough to remember the first performances of "Masks and Faces," when Mrs. Stirling, as Peg Woffington, was in the prime of her beauty and at the height of powers that have never decayed, as those who saw her last performances can bear witness. This excellent actress threatens to leave the stage. If she should refuse to listen to those who hear of this resolve with great regret, she will all too soon become a memory, and make a vacancy that cannot be filled.

Age has few charms, but among them may be reckoned the pleasures of memory; and who that has seen Mrs. Keeley (who is still, happily, with us) in the Smike of "Nicholas Nickleby," or the house-breaker in "Jack Sheppard," to say nothing of other and numberless characters, can ever forget the perfect truth to nature displayed in every part she acted.

What Mrs. Keeley's age may be I shall not be so rude as to inquire; that "age cannot wither her" was evident to me when I saw her the other day, looking exactly as she did thirty years ago.

Others I knew but "by sight" only, namely, Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Orger, Mrs. Kean, Mrs. Honey—and what inimitable actresses were they!

With Mrs. Bancroft I have the honor of a slight personal acquaintance. Off the stage she is delightful; on it, absolute perfection.

As a rule, I venture to say that amateur acting is like amateur painting—simply intolerable. There are brilliant exceptions; notably in the instances of Dickens and Lady Monckton, who, great as she is now—witness her unsurpassable performance in "Jim the Penman"—was but an amateur the other day, when she must forgive me for saying that I could see but little sign of the bud which has since blossomed so abundantly.

I see that my old friend Miss Braddon has just finished her fiftieth, or, as her publishers call it, her "Jubilee" novel. Among all the "people I have known," I think of no one with greater pleasure than Miss Braddon; because I have derived infinite amusement from her works, and as much satisfaction from her personal acquaintance as I have from that of any other authoress. I had the honor of painting her portrait for her husband and publisher, Mr. Maxwell.

I don't know whether she still follows the practice of making drawings of the intended scenes in her novels before she brings them so vividly before us with her pen; but I well remember her showing me several pen-and-ink sketches of scenes in "Lady Audley's Secret"—notably a drawing of the man who is thrown down the well: his boots only and small portions of his legs being visible. The prodigious industry of this author, and the infinite variety of her plots and incidents, astonish such ignorant people as the present writer.

Miss Braddon—or, to give her her proper name, Mrs.

Maxwell—has kindly made suggestions for subjects for pictures to me on many occasions; and I often regret that I did not adopt one of them.

Mrs. S. C. Hall, whose Irish stories were—and perhaps are still—very popular, comes well among authoresses known to me; and many is the pleasant evening that I spent at the pretty little cottage in Brompton called The Rosery. It was there, on a very hot night in the height of the London season, that I saw—for the only time in my life—a lion thoroughly lionized. The lion was Tom Moore, the poet; and the lionizers, consisting chiefly of ladies, clustered round the little man and nearly smothered him. Moore was so diminutive that I could scarcely see his small, gasping mouth, which in its efforts to inhale the dreadful atmosphere, reminded me of a fish out of water. No wonder that he lost one of his shoes; and it was "a sight" to see him sitting, like one of Cinderella's sisters, while a very pretty admirer insisted on replacing the shoe on his little foot.

I have known lions since Moore's days whose roars I prefer to those of the poet; and prominent among them was Charles Dickens, whose dislike of being made an object of special mark in any company was so well known that it would have required lionizers to have been as bold as lions, if they had ventured to risk the reception which the younger author would have assuredly given them if they had treated him *à la* Moore.

I have already spoken of Mademoiselle de la Ramé, otherwise "Ouida;" but I have not noticed an accomplishment which may not be generally known to be possessed by that lady. "Ouida" is an excellent artist, as many of her drawings, hanging on the walls of her rooms in the Langham Hotel, sufficiently proved to me. They were indeed remarkable specimens of amateur work.

I was curious to know the origin of the famous name under which this lady writes, and it is interesting, I think, to find that it arises from a child's attempt to say "Louisa," just as the immortal "Boz" was adopted from another infantine attempt to say "Moses." My information with respect to "Ouida" came from "Ouida" herself, of whom

I saw a good deal some years ago, before she left the fogs of England for the sunshine of Italy.

One of the most original and attractive writers of the present day—whom I have the pleasure and the right to name among those I know—is Miss Rhoda Broughton. I have read all her novels, and I have passed some days in her society in a country-house and in my own, and I can assure those who know the lady's works, but not the author of them, that this writer is just as delightful without the pen as she is with it—brilliant and incisive in conversation; never dull or the cause of dulness in others; in short, a perfect instance of the truth of my theory that the real nature of the woman or the man appears in her or his work.

Of Mrs. Henry Wood I knew so little (she dined but once, I think, at my house), and that little would be as nothing in support of my pet idea, that I must content myself with an expression of gratitude for the pleasure I have received from—I am sorry to say—the few books I have read of hers. With "East Lynne" I was enthralled from the beginning to the end. From what Mrs. Wood told me of the great sale of her books, it is evident that she is one of the most popular of our modern novelists.

"All the world's a stage," and to some actors the stage is all the world. I confess that in some few instances the admiration that an actor has excited in me by his performance on the stage has been succeeded by disappointment when I have met him in private life. It seems as if all the beautiful language, and all that the language means, has fallen from his lips without having penetrated his brain, for his conversation is prosy and commonplace. He is, in fact, "dull company." Among those I have known these are rare exceptions. On the other hand, there are actors, and actresses too, who are as entertaining off the stage as they are on it. My old friend Toole is one; for, funny as he is when in sock and buskin, he is funnier still at a dinner-table. What stories of his could I repeat, if I could tell them as well as he does! Alas! they are public property, and I must not touch them. I hope I shall not offend my friend when I announce that he is a practical joker; but his jokes are harmless — unlike some others that I have named—and always amusing. It is told of him that he was seen, at the close of a railway journey, to be going through a performance with one of his gloves, which, on a close observation, appeared to be the stuffing it with cotton-wool till it assumed the shape of a human hand. He then contrived to arrange it in the front of his coat, so that it should appear to be one of his own, and he placed his railway ticket between the fingers. The train stopped presently, and the usual cry, "All tickets ready!" was heard.

"Tickets, please!" said a guard, opening the door of the carriage.

"Take mine," said Toole.

The guard took the ticket, and the hand as well.

"The guard was a robust person," Toole is reported to have said, "but he staggered back in a faint, calling feebly for smelling-salts."

One more example. That inveterate joker, Sothern, had made an appointment with Toole to dine at a well-known restaurant; the hour of meeting was fixed, and Sothern arrived somewhat before the appointed time. An old gentleman was dining at a table at some little distance from that prepared for the two actors. He was reading the paper, which he had comfortably arranged before him, as he was eating his dinner. Sothern walked up to him, and, striking him a smart blow between the shoulders, said:

"Hullo, old fellow! who would have thought of your dining here? I thought you never—"

The assaulted diner turned angrily round, when Sothern exclaimed:

"I beg you a thousand pardons, sir! I thought you were an old friend of mine—a family man—whom I never expected to see here. I hope you will pardon me."

The old gentleman growled a reply, and Sothern returned to his table, where he was presently joined by Toole, to whom he said:

"See that old boy? I'll bet you half a crown you daren't go and give him a slap on the back, and pretend you have mistaken him for a friend."

"Done!" said Toole, and done it was immediately, with a result that must be imagined, for it was indescribable.

Forgive me, dear Toole, and don't deny these things; for if they are not true, they ought to be.

I now come to one who is as much liked as a man as he is admired as an actor—Henry Irving. Well do I remember seeing my friend in a play called "Hunted Down," and saying to my wife, who was with me, "That is the real thing. That man is a genius." And I was right. If I were to relate a tithe of the kind actions of Irving to his brother-actors, to friends, and to strangers, I should show him to be as good a man off the stage as he is a great one upon it; but I spare his blushes and the patience of my readers.

Common gratitude forces me to add one more name to the list of those from whom I have received so much pleasure. William Farren, worthy heir of a great name, is one of those who have so often delighted me by their admirable rendering of "high comedy," that I cannot resist telling him here what I have felt compelled to tell him privately. The best "Sir Peter Teazle" and the best "Lord Ogleby" is, of course, pre-eminent in minor characters.

And with this honored name I close the list of "people I have known," not without a fear that my readers will endorse the following verse, sent to me by Shirley Brooks, the editor of *Punch*, in return for a good joke that I sent to him for insertion in that periodical:

"There is a young artist called Frith,
His pictures have vigor and pith;
But his writings have not—
They're the kussedest rot
He could trouble an editor with."

I cannot surmount the reluctance I feel to dwell longer on my own doings. Good or bad, those of the last years are familiar to all who have done me the honor to seek out my work in the annual exhibitions.

A new style of art has arisen, which seems to gratify a public ever craving for novelty. Very likely I am posing as the old-fashioned academician, who declines to acknowledge that eccentricity is a proof of genius, or audacity an evidence of power; and I may be justly, or unjustly, accused of unfairness when I declare that the *bizarre,* French, "impressionist" style of painting recently imported into this country will do incalculable damage to the modern school of English art. But I claim the right of judgment that half a century's constant practice of my art must give, and I wish the last words of these reminiscences to be those of warning to the rising generation of painters.

Be impressionist by all means, but let your impressions be as complete and as true to nature as those received by the great old masters. Let it not be possible for any one to say of your impressions, as was well said of some impressionist work now popular, "If nature made that impression upon the man, how much wiser he would have been if he had kept it to himself." Keep in view the honored names of the great painters of old, study their works, and, convincing yourselves that they were produced by simple, earnest, loving study of nature, endeavor to "go and do likewise."

THE END.

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